HISTORY OF THE GERMAN PEOPLE

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THE GERMAN PEOPLE

VOL. III.

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HISTORY OF THE GERMAN PEOPLE at the Close of the Middle Ages. By JOHANNES JANSSEN.

Vols. I. and II. Translated by M. A. MITCHELL and A. M. CHRISTIE.

Vols. III. and IV. Translated by A. M. CHRISTIE.

LONDON:

KEGAN PAUL, TRENCH, TRÜBNER & CO. LTD.

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By JOHANNES JANSSEN

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TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN BY A. M. CHRISTIE

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HISTORY

OF

THE GERMAN PEOPLE

AT THE CLOSE OF THE MIDDLE AGES

BOOK V

CHAPTER I

THE LATER GERMAN HUMANISM

THE later school of German humanism, essentially different from the earlier one, both in its character and its methods, was responsible for a revolution fraught with far-reaching results in the world of thought and intellect.

The earlier humanists had contemplated classical antiquity from the point of view of absolute faith in Christianity, and they had pressed the classics into the service of their creed. They valued the works of the ancient writers for the deeply religious nature of the ideas embodied in them; they regarded them as echoes of primæval inspiration; but they were at the same time decided and active opponents of mere pagan systems of thought and life. They studied antiquity in

a scientific spirit of exhaustive research, and they justified their incorporation of pagan materials into their systems of culture on the plea that these classic works were an indispensable groundwork of scholarship, a splendid means of mental gymnastic training for forming independent judgment and sharpening the intellect for the apprehension and presentation of truth. By the profounder knowledge they acquired of the intellectual life of the ancient world, they hoped to facilitate the understanding of the Scriptures and to put fresh life and reality into the contemporary systems of philosophical and theological study. It was this motive that had inspired the unwearied labours of Nicholas of Cusa and his pupil Agricola in their efforts to graft the study of classic literature on the German university curriculum; that had led Alexander Hegius to make the classics the groundwork of education, and Jacob Wimpheling to write his epoch-making works. 'It is not the study of the heathen writers in itself which is dangerous to Christian culture,' said the latter, 'but the false apprehension and handling of them. It would undoubtedly be absolutely fatal if, as is often the case in Italy, by means of the classics, pagan ways of thought and life, prejudicial to pure Christian morality and the patriotic spirit of the rising generation, were spread abroad, or were to creep into the teaching of our writers and poets.[1] But, on the other hand, a legitimate use of the ancient writers might render the most invaluable services to Christianity and learning. Had not the Fathers of the Church themselves derived the greatest help in their explanations of Scripture from the study

[1] The dangers in this respect from the Italian humanists were fully recognised by Wimpheling; see Wiskowatoff, p. 67.

of these profane writers, and had they not in consequence recommended them to the veneration of Christian students? 'St. Gregory Nazienzen,' he went on to say, 'had described the opponents of classic study as the enemies of true learning;[1] and Pope Gregory the Great had shown conclusively that classic study was a useful preparation and an indispensable aid to the understanding of theology.'

For the same reason the leading theologians of the fifteenth century, Heynlin von Stein, Gregory Reisch, Geiler of Kaisersberg, Gabriel Viel, Johannes Trithemius, had been zealous advocates and promoters of the labours of the Christian humanists.

'With a good conscience,' says Trithemius, 'we can recommend the study of the ancient writers to all such as do not make use of them in a worldly spirit for mere intellectual sport, but for the serious cultivation of their mental powers, and who, after the example of the Fathers of the Church, seek to cull from them good fruit for the nourishment of Christian scholarship.'

All these theologians, who were the chief expositors of contemporay scholasticism in Germany, set themselves strongly against the pernicious habit of word-splitting and subtle dialectical niceties which had been in vogue since the fourteenth century and had led to the gradual degeneration of Christian scholarship, and which still prevailed to a great extent in theological literature and in the pulpits. They were also zealous denouncers of the barbarous Latin which figured so largely in theological writings and lectures. 'This Latin,' said Geiler of Kaisersberg, 'is uncouth and wanting

[1] See the admirable work of Daniel, *Des Etudes Classiques dans la Société.*

in force: it is a wretched mongrel language, neither Latin nor German, but a barbarous compound of both.' 'Is it necessary,' asked Wimpheling, 'to carry on unedifying contentions on the most trivial questions in order to be a thorough and orthodox teacher of theology? Is it essential for this purpose to use an unfamiliar and even repulsive language? Did the Fathers of the Church and the great theologians of the earlier centuries carry on contentions of this sort, entangle themselves in the most hair-splitting casuistical distinctions, and speak in such a barbarous tongue?'

The pioneers of progressive reform in the fifteenth century based their labours on the standpoint of the great theologians of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries; in especial they set up Thomas Aquinas, 'the angel of the School,' once more as a beacon light.

Besides the encouragement they gave to humanist philological learning they were anxious also to connect with the study of theology that of natural science and physics, which had lately come into fashion; above all they aimed at infusing life and reality into traditional systems of theology by the study of the Bible and the Fathers of the Church. They earnestly recommended all theologians to study the Bible and the writings of the Fathers, and while by no means advocating the abolition of the customary scholastic methods, which they admired for the force and definiteness of their logical and dogmatic formulas, they wished to see them liberated from the dead formality which had encrusted them.

In endeavours of this kind the older humanists—themselves men of erudite scholarship and fully aware of the value of this scholarship both for the cause of

theology and the training of the intellect—went hand in hand with the theologians. In the year 1510 Wimpheling brought out a work 'For the Defence of Scholastic Theology,' which may be regarded as the programme of the whole humanist region of the Upper Rhine.[1] And all his associates in the humanist cause were as zealously opposed as he was himself to a one-sided handling of classical antiquity, and to the depreciation of the great services rendered by theologians and philosophers in the better periods of the Middle Ages. They ranked these services as high as did Pico of Mirandola, who makes the scholars and divines say of themselves, 'We shall live, not in the schools of pedants, but in the circles of the wise, who are not concerned about the mother of Andromache, or the sons of Niobe, but with the deeper realities of things human and Divine.'[2]

It was not only ecclesiastical scholarship, however, but the general culture of the nation as well which, according to the older humanists, would be improved and elevated by study of the Greek and Latin classics. It is noteworthy in this respect that the Brethren of the Common Life, who by their schools and didactic writings did more than any educationalists for the spread of classical teaching, laboured also the most zealously for the improvement of their native language and of German poetry, both by reducing to writing existing poetry

[1] See Wiskowatoff, p. 154.

[2] Burckhardt, *Renaissance*, p. 167. Feugère (p. 208) quotes an interesting criticism of the French philosopher Victor Cousin on the scholastics. 'Il est impossible d'avoir plus d'esprit que les scholastiques, de déployer plus de finesse, plus d'harmonie, plus de ressources dans l'argumentation, plus de cette analyse ingénieuse qui divise et subdivise, plus de cette synthèse puissante qui classe et ordonne.'

and by composing new songs and epigrams of a religious and didactic nature. Agricola, the actual founder of the older school of humanism, wrote German songs and insisted that the Latin historians should be translated and expounded in German with the threefold object of 'instructing the people in history, encouraging them to read their own language, and perfecting that language.'

Sebastian Brant, another leading humanist of this period, was the founder of a new epoch in German literature, and so closely did he associate himself with the welfare of the people that with all his distinguished scholarship he did not think it beneath him to translate a prayer-book for popular use.

The development of national historiography and the concomitant improvement of German prose-writing were thus among the important results of the labours of the older humanists.

Wimpheling quotes, with full concurrence, the saying of Geiler of Kaisersberg 'that every man, though he should know all spoken languages, must prize above others the one which he learnt from his parents, and in which, in his youth, he was instructed in Christian lore.' To him personally, he said, it seemed monstrous that learned men should carry prejudice to such an extent as to say that the German mother tongue was fit only for old wives, sailors, and peasants. 'What other language,' said the monk Felix Fabri in his enthusiasm, 'was as noble and as human as German?'[1]

With one and all of these older humanists, in short, we find that all their scholastic and literary

[1] J. Fabri, *Evagatorium*, iii. 449.

activity and all their reform labours were coloured and inspired by a strong national and religious spirit. One and all recognised and fought against the deep and grievous abuses of the Church: plurality of benefices; limitation of the higher Church dignities to the families of the nobles; ecclesiastical greed of gold and territory; the draining of the national resources by the rapacious extortions of the Papal See; the scandalous profligacy which characterised so large a part of both the secular and the regular clergy; the luxury and debauchery in the palaces of so many of the ecclesiastical princes; all mercenary traffic in sacred things, all merely hypocritical show of piety; all purely mechanical performance of religious rites.

The older humanists were men with a real vocation for reform; belief in the truth and holiness of Christianity and the Church was part and parcel of their existence, and their earnest, devout lives, and their fidelity to the Church's rules and precepts, were in perfect accord with their convictions. In their clerical and political opinions they stood firmly on the ground of the Middle Ages, and they represented collectively the mediæval attitude towards Popedom and Imperialism. The subjugation of the Turks and the restoration of Christianity to its dominion over the world seemed to them the highest and worthiest human aim, and their entire love and devotion, in spite of the then weakness of Imperialism, was given to the Roman Emperor of the German nation, whom all nations of the earth, as they held, were bound to honour, and whose exalted office it was to be Protector of the Church.[1]

[1] See the more detailed notices of the earlier humanists and theologians in the first volume of this work.

Fundamentally different from these older or Christian humanists was the school of younger humanists, whose actual founder and chief representative was Erasmus of Rotterdam.[1]

Desiderius Erasmus, of Rotterdam, born under the most unhappy circumstances, left an orphan in early youth, and deprived of his inheritance by fraudulent guardians, took the monastic vow, without any inward call, at the Augustinian monastery of Stein, in the neighbourhood of Gouda, and ever after cherished a deep grudge against the ordinances of the Church. In the year 1491 he forsook the monastery, and for the next ten years wandered about the world restless and dissatisfied, declaring his intention now of settling in England, now in France, now in Italy, now in the Netherlands, now in Burgundy; even Poland and Spain were on the list of countries in which, in turn, he intended to end his days. At an early date in his career we meet with complaints of religious laxity on his part. We read that 'that distinguished scholar Erasmus, although a priest, never reads the Holy Mass, seldom even hears it; that he considers the Breviary prayers ridiculous, and inveighs openly and unsparingly against the Church's fasts and rules

[1] Erasmian literature has of late received important additions from the admirable biographical and literary works of Durand de Laur (1872), R. B. Drummond (1873), and Feugère (1874) .... see also F. Nève, 'Erasme d'après ses Nouveaux Historiens,' in the *Revue Cathol.* 2e sér. t. xiii, 1875, and Rother, 'La Vie et les Travaux d'Erasme considérés dans leurs Rapports avec la Belgique,' in *Les Mém. Couronnées par l'Acad. Roy. de Belgique*, 1855 .... For an account of Erasmus's sojourn in Italy see the *Monographie* of Molhac (Paris, 1888) and the *English Historical Review* (1895), x. 642–662.

(For further works on Erasmus mentioned by Dr. Janssen see the above note in full in the original German, 17th and 18th ed., vol. ii. p. 7.—Translator's Note.)

of abstinence, as against an intolerable yoke;' 'that he gives all the greater cause of offence by such conduct because he is such a learned scholar, and has such great influence over the young,' and that by his example he preaches the doctrine 'that for men of learning the rules of the Church are superfluous and even contemptible.' When the prior of his Order pressed him to return to the monastery Erasmus answered that he was neither physically nor intellectually fitted for monastic life; that monasteries had formerly tended to the salvation of the world, but that now, on the contrary, they were the cause and origin of all the prevalent corruption. Christianity and religion, he said, were not bound up with any particular order or way of life; the whole world, according to Christ's teaching, was one great family — one great cloister, one might almost say. The journeyings of a Solon, a Pythagoras, a Plato, were just as meritorious as the seclusion of a monk. The apostles, St. Paul especially, had also travelled about the world; he, Erasmus, would be made welcome in every region of the earth; every country would receive him hospitably. As to his own general character and morals, he entertained very cheerful views. Familiar intercourse with wise men, so he wrote to the prior, had made him a better man; avarice was not his weak point; of ambition he had not a spark; it was true that he had yielded to the temptation of sinful lusts, but he had never become a slave to them; drunkenness and debauchery were antagonistic to his nature.

From vices of this last description, indeed, even had he not always shunned all that was outwardly coarse in life, he would have been hindered by his delicate

physique and weakly constitution. His most ardent admirers, however, never described him as a staunch ascetic; on the contrary, many of them were inclined to think that it was indulgence in the strong wines he was so fond of which was the cause of his frequent attacks of stone. As for his contempt for money, of which he boasts so often, he certainly did not covet riches for their own sake, but he held firmly to the opinion that a wise and circumspect man ought to get and to keep as much money as would enable him to bear cheerfully every reverse of fortune and all hardships. He contrived always to make the acquisition of an income as easy to himself as possible. He considered the alms-begging of the Mendicant Friars as unworthy of the dignity of free human beings; and he refused as an intolerable burden, incompatible with his independence, any post which would have imposed definite duties on him and restricted to him to a definite income. But at the same time he did not think it beneath his dignity to cringe with the basest flattery before prelates, princes, and nobles, in order to wheedle out of them yearly allowances or gifts of money; or to procure the substantial gratitude of the wealthy by laudatory dedications. Not the fiercest denunciation brought on himself by such behaviour could deter him from this method of increasing his income, and he managed his pecuniary affairs so advantageously that in course of time he was able to spend 600 ducats yearly, a sum which, considering the value of money at that time, was quite out of the ordinary; and out of an almost royal treasury of gold and silver goblets and valuable coins and medals he left property to the value of not less than 7,000 ducats. 'My cupboards,' he writes, 'are

filled with presents of exquisitely wrought goblets, plates, spoons, and clocks, some of them of solid gold, and rings innumerable.'

Literary toadying of princes and distinguished people in order to win from them favour or gifts, and the odious habit of prefixing to the most trumpery writings flattering dedications addressed to patrons, became quite common among the younger school of humanists through the example of Erasmus. And from their leader also these 'younger' humanists contracted that vanity and self-conceit which were so marked in Erasmus during his youth, and which clung to him through life.

This over-estimate of himself was fostered by the panegyrics showered on him in early manhood, and it blinded him to such an extent that he came to regard his own opinion on all things in heaven and earth as unanswerable, and invariably gave way to irritability and temper when his judgment was in any way disputed or his writings met with censure and opposition.

His talent for fulsome flattery was shown in innumerable cases, especially during the later period of his life, to be thoroughly matched by a capacity for malignant spite against adversaries, on whom he delighted to heap insult after insult.[1] He met all attacks on himself not only by completely ignoring, but with intentional disregard for, the truth; and used any weapon that came handy to annihilate

[1] Amongst the worst specimens of his flattering letters is one to Pope Leo X., of whom he says, amongst other things, 'Qui quanto ceteri mortales pecudibus antecellunt, tanto ipse mortales universos majestate superat,' &c. With regard to his flattery we find it difficult to agree with R. B. Drummond where he says (ii. 345), 'His letters in this respect are models of good taste.'

his opponents both as men and as writers. Even the printers of writings hostile to himself were made to suffer from his vindictiveness. For instance, he denounced as a raging dragon and a consummate scoundrel the Strasburg printer Schott, from whose press a pamphlet unfriendly to himself had been issued; he declared Schott's offence to be worse than a theft, a murder, or an act of adultery. Whoever presumed to oppose or gainsay him was, in his eyes, an evil-doer against whom he was entitled to the help of magisterial force.

Among the Italian humanists the habit of calumny had long been the fashion; Erasmus, by his behaviour, did much to introduce the practice into Germany, and to cause it to be considered reasonable and honourable. The saying of Laurentius Balla became a by-word in Germany: 'Fighting may be disgraceful, but to yield to an enemy is still more so.' In one point Erasmus even went beyond his Italian models. The latter reviled and insulted each other mercilessly, but they refrained from the pious phraseology with which Erasmus wrapt a cloak of sanctity around him after plunging a dagger into the heart of an adversary.

Erasmus exercised an enormous influence on his times.[1]

The extent and variety of his knowledge in almost every branch of contemporary learning, his untiring activity in all directions, his consummate mastery and

[1] An influence which can only be compared with that of Voltaire in the eighteenth century. Erasmus has, indeed, been called the Voltaire of the Renaissance; but the dark side of his counterpart was undoubtedly of a blacker shade.

artistic treatment of the Latin language, and the variety and richness of his style were equalled by few. He was a man of swift and universal perception, and of keen, incisive speech. The essential significance of the man lay in his remarkable versatility, by means of which he concentrated in himself, as in a burning focus, the most various aspects and tendencies of literature. He brought out fresh editions of the Latin and translations of the Greek classics, fresh editions and fresh expositions of the Bible, and produced original treatises in every branch of literature—philosophy, theology, education, satire, &c.

But he was altogether wanting in intellectual depth, and he seldom applied himself to exhaustive research. He frequently said of himself that he 'poured out' rather than 'worked out' his thoughts, and that it was much easier to him to write a book straight off than to read it through and improve it after it was written. Hence his frequent contradictions of himself, and the many inaccurate and superficial statements which his enemies justly criticise. He handled with masterly skill the weapons of scorn, irony, and malicious satire, in which he modelled himself on his earliest favourite, Lucian. Manly dignity, warmth of feeling, self-sacrifice, love of his country and his Church appear as little in his writings as in his life. It was his overestimate of the infinite importance of his personality which gave weight to his work and was the secret of his immense influence. In a satirical dialogue of the time we read that 'Erasmus was as small—indeed, much smaller—in his character than in his person.'

He pursued his travels through England, Italy,

France, and other countries, in the spirit of a mere book-student, never as an observer of national life. He even closed his mental pores against the chance admission of any influences from the living surroundings he came in contact with. He boasted that he understood as little of Italian as of Hindi, and was also quite ignorant of German, French, and English. In order to keep intact the purity and delicacy of his perfect Latin, and to latinise his whole mode of thought, he repudiated every living tongue as base and pernicious.

In this matter also he was taken as model by the younger German humanists, who, in opposition to the older humanists, despised and ridiculed their mother-tongue, and called it barbarous and old-fashioned.

But while Erasmus in his arrogant, self-satisfied scholasticism held himself wholly apart from the nation in life, thought, and sympathy, he had no scruples whatever about ridiculing and travestying the earnest piety of the people. He represented as childish superstition the religious belief which his sceptical, light-minded nature was incapable of understanding; but at the same time he was himself so superstitious that he tried to discover from astrological horoscopes the reasons why his own times were so addicted to controversy.[1]

Erasmus's own account of the actual object of

[1] See his letters, *Op.* iii. 405, 427, ep. 380, 405. In a letter of May 29, 1527 (*Op.* iii. 983, ep. 868) he praises the skill of the astrologers 'qui ex astris norunt sibi dies et horas fortunatas eligere.' It was the same also with the Italian Humanists, who the more they let go of a living Christian faith became the more a prey to all manner of superstitions. See Burckardt, *Renaissance*, pp. 410–422; Pastor, *Geschichte der Päpste*, iii. 107.

his labours was that he wished in every possible way to promote the study of classical literature, art, and philosophy, and, by connecting classical study with the study of theology, to win for the former the approbation of the Christian world; he wished also to assist in the propagation of the 'Philosophy of Christ' and the restoration of true theology, making use, to this end, of humanist studies and culture. But the theological reform at which he aimed was not to consist only in forms of language and systems of instruction, but was to embrace also the inward spirit and substance; humanistic rhetoric was to supersede speculative research, and the hard and fast limits of dogmatic teaching to give way to elastic and liberal methods. 'If we wish to attain peace and unity,' he said, 'we must have as few dogmatic definitions as possible, and in many things we must allow each individual to exercise his free, independent judgment.'[1]

And to the service of this ideal, elastic, adaptable theology of his he brought language so elastic also, so infinitely flexible and accommodating, so susceptible of being variously interpreted according to individual taste, that people of all creeds and no creed, of the most positive as well as the most negative minds, catholics, heretics, and nationalists, by one watchword or another, could all point to him as their guide or authority.

Luther was perfectly justified in saying of his shifty, slippery, equivocating language, 'If we think

[1] See R. Blackley Drummond's *Life of Erasmus*, ii. 182. Erasmus vaunts his undertaking with the words, 'Theologiam nimium ad sophisticas argutias delapsam ad fontes ac priscam simplicitatem revocare conatus sum . . . ad puriorem Christianismum orbem ceremoniis pene Judaicis indormientem expergefeci' (*Op.* iii. 1727, app. ep. 345).

that he has said an immense deal he has in reality said nothing; for all his words can be twisted and turned whichever way one likes.'[1] He busied himself with theological questions more for his own profit than for the sake of truth, religion, and the Church. His want of firm, unalterable convictions was on a par with his want of courage. 'I make provision for my own peace of mind, and hold myself, as far as possible, neutral.' He acknowleged, indeed, that out of politeness and to avoid disputation he spoke in equivocal and feigned language, and he was of opinion that the masses can only be kept within the limits of duty by being now and then deceived with falsehoods.

He protested loudly and solemnly that he would never separate himself from the Catholic Church, but long before Luther he cast doubt on the Divine appointment of the Pope and spoke in false or equivocal terms about other dogmas.[2]

Albertus Pius, Prince of Carpi, wrote to him once as follows: 'All people who penetrate into the spirit of your writings, without being dazzled and blinded by their beauty of style and richness of language (for indeed there are many who forget the kernel in the beauty of the shell), will be indignant when they discover that firmly established doctrines have long since been questioned by you, that you have robbed the holy sacraments of their sacred character, and even

[1] See Hess, ii. 453. 'Le *oui* et le *nôn*, le *pour* et le *contre* se heurtent dans ses écrits,' says Durand de Laur (ii. 546) with justice. 'Comme écrivain religieux trois choses lui ont manqué: la fermeté et la vivacité de la foi, la rigueur de l'esprit théologique, les élans du mysticisme chrétien qui ravissent l'âme et l'unissent à Dieu' (ii. 561).

[2] See R. B. Drummond, i. 319–322 and ii. 162, 182–186, 310; Feugère, pp. 236–240.

impugned the honour of the Pontifical Chair. They will think differently of you when they realise with what little reverence you speak of holy things, and how you insult the monks and ridicule their institutions and ordinances. You have audaciously asserted that in olden times the papal power was neither recognised nor exercised, that bishops had no higher rank than the rest of the clergy, and that marriage was not included among the actual sacraments. How ill-judged was it of you to extol the married state at the expense of celibacy, to find fault with the Church liturgy and ritual, to speak with contempt of religious ceremonies and institutions as mere human inventions, and so forth! Have you not thus encouraged frivolous and light-minded people to think that all these ordinances have no intrinsic power and are utterly worthless? Have you not by such inconsiderate utterances brought contempt on the whole edifice of religion?' Melanchthon stigmatises Erasmus as the actual originator of the controversy which arose later on about the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. Although this is undoubtedly a false charge, it cannot be denied that several of his intimate friends, such as Wolfgang Fabricius Capito, Conrad Pelicanus, and others, came forward in later years as followers of Zwingli, and that Zwingli was himself a personal admirer of Erasmus.

Erasmus did, however, seriously propose a revision of the doctrines laid down by the early Church. He was inclined to look upon the transactions, the controversies, and the doctrinal decisions of the christological period as the first step in the continuous deterioration of the Church. The Church

had since then, he considered, departed from her 'ancient evangelical simplicity;' theology had become subservient to a casuistical philosophy, which in its turn had degenerated into the scholastic methods by which the actual ruin of Christian doctrine and Christian life had been brought about. During the whole of his literary career he waged war against this barren scholasticism with an acrimony that had no parallel, and its representatives were a butt for his ridicule and contempt. Ever since the dominion of this scholasticism had set in, the whole western world, he declared, had been subject to a spirit of Judaism and Pharisaism which had crushed the true life of Christianity and theology and perverted it to mere monastic sanctity and empty ceremonialism.

The contempt for the Middle-Ages as for a period of darkness and spiritual bondage, of sophistry in learning, and mere *outwardness* in life and conduct, originated with Erasmus and his school, and was transmitted by them to the later so-called reformers. But, thanks to the high esteem in which Erasmus was held for his culture and scholarship, his ironical and calumnious writings against mediæval culture, and against the influence of the Church and the traditions of Christian schools, passed for a long time unchallenged.

His most influential production in this respect was the 'Praise of Folly,' which made its first appearance in 1509, and within a few months went through seven editions. In this satire Folly, personified, comes on the scene reciting her own panegyric. She boasts of all the services she has rendered humanity, enumerates them *seriatim*, and extols the very things which deserve to be censured as errors or abuses.

When the Prince of Carpi brought against Erasmus the reproach that from the poisonous seed scattered throughout this satire the most pernicious fruits had grown, the reproof was not provoked by the attacks the author had made on the flagrant abuses in the Church—on plurality of benefices, warrior prelates, or superstition in Church ceremonies—but by the fact that Erasmus had taken up arms against the institution itself which had thus become corrupted by abuses. The language of Erasmus, moreover, breathed none of the sincere sorrow of a Sebastian Brant, or a Geiler of Kaisersberg, but only scorn and derision, and in its reckless mingling of things sacred and profane, often descended to wantonness and blasphemy.

The 'Praise of Folly' may almost be called a prologue to the great theological tragedies of the sixteenth century.[1]

In this satire the piety of the people is made to appear corrupt to the very core, their whole religion as a travesty of Christianity, and scholastic divinity as a caricature of biblical theology; whilst the attacks on the Pope are so virulent as to have left little or nothing to be said by later enemies of papacy.

No writer of former times ever brought reverence for the Chair of St. Peter to such a low ebb as did Erasmus, none ever mocked Holy Writ by such burlesque treatment.

Nevertheless he professed the highest veneration for the Bible as the source of Christian faith, and urged that theology, if it was to be restored to

[1] Feugère, p. 341; see Pennington, *Erasmus* (London, 1875), p. 77.

soundness, must be subjected again to the test of the Scriptures. All nations of the earth must have the Bible put into their hands. 'I wish that even the weakest woman should read the Gospel—should read the Epistles of Paul,' he said in the year 1516 in his preface to his edition of the New Testament—'and I wish that they were translated into all languages and read by Scotchmen and Irishmen, by Turks and Saracens; I long that the husbandman should sing portions of them to himself as he follows the plough, that the weaver should hum them to the tune of his shuttle, that the traveller should beguile with their stories the tedium of his way.'

To read the Scriptures, he said, was the first step towards understanding them, and granting that many might turn them into ridicule, some at any rate would be won over by them.

It was unjust that the lessons of faith should be the exclusive property of those whom the masses sum up under the names of theologians and monks, and who form the smallest part of the Christian population, while many of them do not even deserve the name of Christian. Free study of the Scriptures, such as the Bohemian Brothers enjoyed when the authority of the Church was overthrown, was already advocated by Erasmus in 1511. When the Brothers presented him with one of the formulas of their creed, which they had drawn up according to the new interpretation of the Bible, he congratulated them on their accurate knowledge of truth. 'As far as he had read in this book,' he said, 'he thoroughly approved of it, and he felt sure that the remainder must be equally satisfactory.' But he could not be induced to give the Brothers the

public assurance they wished for of his agreement with them. 'With their enemies,' he argued, 'such testimony would be of no use to them, while his own writings would be in danger from such a step, and would be taken out of the hands of the people by papal authority, to the great prejudice of enlightened religion. It was expedient, therefore, for the general good that he should not give his testimony publicly, but should preserve his authority and prestige unimpaired.' His own interpretation of the Scriptures was a thoroughly rationalistic one. He insisted on an intellectual, a literary, or, as he expressed it, an allegorical method of explaining the Bible stories. His allegorical interpretation, however, was very far removed from the orthodox mystic significance which the early Fathers often delighted to attach to the Bible stories, but which always recognised the sacredness and divinity of the simple word-sense. Erasmus explained the Scriptures much in the same way as he would explain mythological fables and sagas, not according to the literal meaning of the words, but according to the general truths and 'morals' hidden behind the narratives. In his 'Handbook of a Soldier of Christ'[1] he writes thus: 'If you read in an unallegorical sense that Adam's body was made of clay and a soul breathed into it; that Eve was formed out of his rib; that they were forbidden to eat of the apple-tree; that God took a walk in the Garden of Eden; that the guilty couple hid themselves; that an angel with a flaming sword was placed at the gate of Paradise, so that Adam and Eve

[1] The *Enchiridion of Erasmus*. There is an English translation of this entitled *The Christian's Manual*, by J. Spier. 2nd ed. London, 1752.—TRANSLATOR.

might not go back again: if, I say, you read all this only literally—on the surface, as it were—I do not see that you have done more than in reading about the clay statue which Prometheus made, and how he stole fire from heaven and gave it to his image, so that the dust became alive. There may, indeed, be greater profit in reading the poetical fables of the heathens, if the allegorical meaning is grasped, than in reading the Bible stories, if we keep only to the literal sense. What difference is there between the Books of Kings and Judges and the history of Livy, if you leave out the allegory? For in Livy there is much that would tend to the improvement of morals, while in these books of the Bible there is much that is offensive—for example, the intrigues of David, his act of adultery compassed by a murder, the guilty love of Samson, and so forth. Nearly all the books of the Old Testament moreover are frequently objectionable, either from the obvious absurdity of their narratives or from their enigmatical obscurity. In the New Testament also obscurities occur over and over again. In the passage where Jesus is predicting the end of the world and the persecutions the Apostles will undergo, he confuses and contradicts his sayings to such an extent that it seems to me he must have wished to make his meaning dark, not only for the Apostles, but also for us. Many passages are, in my opinion, inexplicable—for instance, that about the unpardonable sin against the Holy Ghost. Others can only be explained figuratively. By the fire that is talked of in Scripture we must understand the "fire of God's wrath" and the punishment of God.' 'There is no other flame in which that rich man in the Gospel is tortured, and no other

punishment of hell than the incessant soul torture which attends the habit of sinning.'

'In his commentaries on the New Testament,' says Dr. Johann Eck very truly, 'Erasmus presumes to set right the Holy Ghost, who was the instructor of the Apostles.' 'You say,' Eck writes to him, 'that the Evangelists were mistaken. No Christian will ever accept the theory of the Evangelists having made mistakes. Far be it from us ever to suppose such a possibility of men taught by the Holy Ghost, and by Jesus our Saviour, of men who were the divinely inspired founders of our faith. If in this point the utterance of Holy Writ is not to be relied on, what other part of it can be safe against suspicion of error?'

'That the writers of the Bible were on the whole inspired by the Holy Ghost, and guided by divine promptings, Erasmus did not deny, but he granted as much as this to the great heathen writers and poets who had taught such noble lessons, and whom he considered worthy to stand side by side with the sacred writers of the Christian Church.'

'Let the first place by all means,' he says in his 'Table Talk,' 'be granted to the sacred writers, but for all that I so constantly find in the pagan authors passages so pure, so holy, so godlike, that I am convinced that a divine spirit prompted the utterances of these men. I cannot read Cicero's essays on old age, on friendship, and on duty, or his 'Tusculanae,' without sometimes being moved to kiss the volumes and to bless the pious heart which must have been inspired by the Deity. But when I hold in my hands the moral writings of modern days, how cold they all

seem! I can scarcely refrain from exclaiming: 'Holy Socrates, pray for us. I often feel sure that Virgil and Horace are saints in heaven. And if the pagans could become saints, to what end is all this difficult Christian asceticism, to what end the following of evangelical counsel? What profit is there in the institutions of the Church, in fastings, in pilgrimages, and in other devotional rites?' Christ, the all-perfect Teacher of virtue and the loftiest of sages, who presented goodness to us in utter purity, Christ, so Erasmus held, had not enjoined fasting; on the contrary, he had set himself entirely in opposition to this and other kindred regulations; fasting was a human invention; it was even a form of tyranny.

The 'Philosophy of Christ,' for the promulgation of which Erasmus desired to labour, was in substance no more than the philosophy of a respectable moral man who kept himself, as far as possible, blameless before the world.

In his 'Table Talk,' which he had constantly in his hands in his old age, and which he considered an important work for Christian education, the means towards this education consist chiefly in the acquisition of fine intellectual culture, in following the dictates of healthy human understanding, and in making use of all possible aids of human skill. 'Erasmus says and teaches many godless things in his "Table Talk" under feigned names and characters,' says Luther; 'above all he advocates war against the Church and against Christian faith.' The 'Table Talk' was specially intended for the young, and nevertheless it contains the most venomous ridicule of monks and of cloister life, of

fasts, pilgrimages, and so forth, and even pictures of improper scenes. Erasmus could not even refrain from coarse lasciviousness in some of his notes on Holy Scripture. The moral of it all is that human cleverness rules life, and views death, because it cannot escape from it, with philosophic resignation. In a treatise on the contempt of death, in which he seeks to comfort a father for the loss of his twenty-year-old son, he quotes various passages from pagan writers on the shortness and misery of life, and amongst them the well-known saying: 'The best of all is, never to have been born; the next best is to die at the moment of birth.' 'Who is there,' he asks, 'who could not with perfect truth concur in this statement?' 'The wise man must bear everything with the unflinching courage of cheerfulness: sorrow is of no profit to the dead, and is hurtful to the living.' At the end of the treatise he gives a so-called Christian view of death, introducing it with the following words: 'After having had recourse hitherto to the means of consolation which are at the service of every pagan, I will now briefly state what is required by religion and by Christian faith.' Here are some of the sentences which we are to regard as 'Christian' and 'pious:' 'However terrible death may be, we must make it welcome, for we can in no way escape from it.' 'Even if death annihilated us completely we might still bear it with equanimity, because it puts an end to the weariness of life.' 'If by death the soul, with its ethereal origin, escapes from the coarse prison and labour-house of the body, we may count those happy and to be congratulated who escape from life and return to a state of blissful freedom.'

Of Christ, the Giver of eternal life, and of the hopes grounded on Him, there is no mention in his treatise.[1]

Such was the 'new culture,' the 'Christian Philosophy,' the 'new theology' promulgated by Erasmus the humanist, Erasmus for a long time looked upon as the greatest intellectual light in the Western world and as the centre of literary Europe. His writings were bought up with unprecedented enthusiasm, read and devoured with the greatest avidity. He himself speaks of his having been saluted as the 'champion of learning,' the 'High Priest of true theology,' 'the star of Germany.' When he returned to Germany from England in the autumn of 1513 his arrival was treated as a great and joyful event, and celebrated as a universal festival for all people of culture. In many towns he was received almost as a king; he was met by ambassadors; speeches were delivered, gifts and addresses presented to him. Even Ulrich Zasius was so bewitched by the brilliancy of his endowments, the versatility of his culture, and the exquisiteness of his Latin, that he declared him to be the greatest of all the scholars Germany had ever possessed.

The whole generation of youthful enthusiasts for classical learning were beside themselves with joy and looked upon Erasmus as a saint.

'Thou incomparable man,' says the humanist William Nesel in a letter to him, 'thou hast the power

[1] . . . Feugère (pp. 362–364), comparing the views of Erasmus with those of Montaigne, says: 'C'est déjà l'esprit philosophique cherchant à dissiper les terreurs religieuses des derniers instants de l'homme. Erasme, comme plus tard Montaigne, n'est pas éloigné d'envier aux anciens cette mort paisible à laquelle ils arrivaient sans chagrin dans un état de somnolence confuse.'

to bestow immortality.' And another time Nesel declared that he (Nesel) stood as far below the lowest of scholars as Erasmus was high above the highest. Humanists like Eobanus Hessus, Justus Jonás, Caspar Schalbe made pilgrimages to the dwelling-place of Erasmus 'through forest after forest,' writes Schalbe, 'through villages raging with infectious diseases,' in order to seek out the 'one pearl of the universe.'

The worship of genius, thus concentrated on Erasmus, was an entirely new manifestation in Germany; among the smaller fry of the younger humanists it degenerated into a perfect mania for mutual adulation, a mania which Erasmus encouraged by the systematic manufacture of fulsome eulogiums, which he lavished profusely on any individual who might, he thought, at some time or other be used as a mouthpiece for his own ends.

Another way in which Erasmus exercised a potent influence over the younger humanists was by the contempt which his teaching and his one-sided classical enthusiasm inspired for all mediæval ecclesiastical learning. It has been said of him, and not without justice, that he brought the study of philosophy into disrepute, that he exalted rhetoric, wit, and elegance of style above serious, scientific, and speculative research. 'It is very easy,' writes Wimpheling, 'to represent scholastic learning as sophistry and barbarism to young men who are enamoured of the pagan poets. These young enthusiasts are only too glad to see contempt poured on studies which require hard work from them, and on the other hand to hear praise bestowed on all that they find easy and entertaining. The humanist Jacob Locher, surnamed Philomusus,

had already advocated the cult of the Muses in place of the scholastic subjects: the sacred art of poetry, he said, should take precedence of all other studies; the scholiasts, with all their supposed learned labours, were mere theological jackanapes deserving the scorn and ridicule of all really cultivated people. But from the poets, the rising generation would get real culture; even Ovid was an exceedingly chaste writer, and the sayings of Juvenal were on a par with evangelical truth.

With the second decade of the sixteenth century complaints increase concerning the decay and depreciation of philosophic studies, the one-sided, exclusive attention to the classics, and the self-conceited arrogance as well as the immorality of the younger humanists. 'Philosophy,' writes Johannes Cochlaeus in the year 1512, 'is completely set aside.' It is a great mistake; for humanistic studies, however much they adorn real scholarship, are hurtful in the extreme to those who have no foundation of sound erudition. Hence the jejune shallowness of a certain set of persons to whom the uninitiated have erroneously given the title of poets; hence their buffoonery and lasciviousness. They are base slaves of Bacchus and Venus, not pious priests of Phoebus and Pallas.[1]

The 'Poets,' as the younger humanists were commonly called, worked themselves to such a pitch of enthusiasm for the classics that they could see no value whatever in anything that was not Latin or Greek; in language and thought they repudiated their German origin. Their apostasy from the traditional spirit of the Fatherland protruded itself so egregiously,

[1] See Otto, 26.

that they even became ashamed of their German names and manufactured new ones from the Latin or Greek vocabularies. A Schuster became a 'Sutor' or 'Sutorius,' a Fischer a 'Piscator,' and a Hans Jäger first of all a 'Venator' and then a 'Crotus Rubianus.' 'When you were still called Jäger of Dornheim,' his friend Conrad wrote to the latter, 'then the schoolman, the reverend *Doctor*, the sagacious, the irrefutable *Doctor* was still entirely to your taste; but after you were born again, and changed from a Jäger of Dornheim into a Crotus Rubianus, you lost your long tail and ass's ears, like Apuleius when he was transformed from a donkey back to a man. Bless us and save us! Escaped from the rocks and the quicksands, and safe in the harbour, you realise now how miserable those must be who have not yet shaken off the yoke of barbarism.'

The younger humanists looked down with contempt on the so-called 'ancient barbarians' who busied themselves with learning and dialectics, were ignorant of classical Latin, and could not write verses such as the 'poets' poured out.

The majority of humanists, indeed, devoted their energies almost entirely to verse-making. But the results were feeble and worthless. There was not a spark of creative power, no substance of truth, no depth of thought or vivacity of treatment in any of the innumerable poetic effusions of which they made such a parade, pluming themselves on being second Horaces and Virgils. There was never any attempt to penetrate the spirit of the ancient writers; they considered elegance of language as the chief end of culture and

exalted the outward beauty of form above the inward matter.

How empty and insipid, for instance, are the three hundred hexameter lines in which the humanist Hermann van dem Busche sings the praises of the sacred city of Cologne! Rhetorical flourishes and classical quotations make up the chief substance of the poem; all the gods of heathen mythology are summoned together for the glorification of the town; only once, incidentally, is the name of Christ mentioned, and as for any knowledge of the contemporary life of the city, one gets as good as nothing. The poem of Eobanus Hessus in praise of Erfurt is no less vapid. The town is represented as the home of the muses, the birthplace of Pallas; the rushing river Gera is a Triton; gods and demi-gods give their names to the professors; the humanist Mutian is glorified as Minos; Eoban himself does not rank below Homer. This poem, says its author, will confer immortal fame on Erfurt; as Troy lives through the 'Iliad,' so Erfurt, even should it be destroyed from the face of the earth, will live on for ever in his verses.

But as crowning specimens of bad taste and utter worthlessness we commend those humanist poems which deal with Christian material, representing the Divine Creator as ruler of high Olympus, and as a thundering Zeus, turning sacred things, in short, into mere child's play. Eobanus Hessus, for instance, in the year 1514, published a volume of 'Christian Heroids,' or love-letters from Christian heroines to their lovers, after the model of Ovid. Amongst these are letters from St. Mary of Magdalen to Christ; and even God the Father is made to exchange letters with the Virgin

Mary. One cannot read this sort of thing without a shudder. Erasmus, however, declared himself delighted with the work, and greeted Eobanus on the strength of it as the German Ovid who alone could rescue Germany from barbarism.

These 'poets' displayed greater naturalness in several shameless imitations of the ancient erotic writers, in which Conrad Celtes had been their precursor and model. Celtes had far out-Ovided Ovid by his indecent descriptions, and had claimed special merit on this score, saying that he wished, by a naked presentation of reality, to warn and check the unbridled appetites of the young. Under the same shallow pretext many of the humanists used to read the most profligate pagan poetry with their young pupils.

'Can you deny,' asks Prince Carpi of Erasmus, 'that the same state of things exists now in Germany as has so long prevailed with us in Italy, where the so-called fine arts are cultivated exclusively, and with contempt for philosophy and theology? A melancholy mixture of Christian truth and pagan ideas is spread abroad, love of controversy fills all minds, and social morality does not conform in any way to Christian doctrine.' In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, many of the Italian humanists had already assumed an attitude of indifference or scepticism towards the Church, and were no longer ruled by Christianity, with its constant reference to a higher life. They filled the land with their lascivious writings, and set examples of profligacy by their lives. With Greek learning they had in most cases imbibed Greek vices, and they were followers of a shameless philosophy of pleasure-seeking, as Boccaccio has shown in his novels.

And this contagion was now spreading rapidly in Germany. Men like Locher, Hermann van dem Busche, Ulrich von Hutten were in no way behind the Italians in immorality, and they pushed the disregard of Christian duties in their daily lives to the utmost excess. As strong drinkers the Germans, indeed, outdid the Italians. Not one of the latter could have competed with an Eobanus Hessus, who thought nothing of emptying a bucket of ale at one draught. He was celebrated in song as the 'mighty toper.'

As for that 'melancholy mixture of Christian truth and pagan philosophy' which Prince Carpi and other serious-minded Italians deplored, there was, indeed, ample evidence of its having taken root in Germany also; witness especially the teaching of Conrad Mutianus Rufus and the circle of humanists of whom he was the leader.

Among the North German universities Erfurt had already been distinguished at an early period for its zeal in teaching the Greek and Latin classics, and had received in this respect the most hearty support from the three leading religious professors, with whose labours the fame of the university in the last decades of the fifteenth century is principally connected—Jodocus Trutseller of Eisenach and Bartholomew Arnold of Usingen, theologians, and Henning Goede, professor of law. These three men, who later on, at the outbreak of the religious war, suffered misfortunes and calumny of all sorts for their adhesion to the catholic faith, were at the time we write of on friendly terms with the chief leaders of the rising generation of humanists, Maternus Pistoris and Nicholas Marshalk.

Maternus and Marshalk used the ancient authors—

poets and all—exclusively as the subjects of their lectures, but with wise discretion and moderation they did not insist on undivided attention to humanistic teaching, and, in spite of their enthusiasm for the classics, they were far from seeking to reform the study of theology by means of the humanities, to upset the ancient doctrine of the Church, or to attack the foundations of Christianity. It was not until Mutian, a prebendary of Gotha, assumed the leadership of the rising generation of humanists that a strong spirit of innovation declared itself among the Erfurt 'poets.' Within the circle of humanists which included Eobanus Hessus, Crotus Rubianus, Petrejus Eberbach, George Spalatin, Justus Jonas, Herebord von der Marthen, and for a short time also Ulrich von Hutten, Mutian was worshipped as a 'teacher of pure virtue' and 'a father of beatific peace.'

In Italy Mutian had become a warm advocate of the Neoplatonism which prevailed among the humanists of that country, and Politian and Marsilius Ficinus, apostles of this philosophy, were objects of his particular veneration. He left no record of his opinions in any work of learning, and in this respect he likened himself to Christ and Socrates, who he said had left no writings to the world. But his many confidential letters to friends leave little doubt that, for a time at least, he had quite broken with positive Christianity. He conceived Christianity as the religion of pure humanity, not founded, like Mosaism, on any revelation.

In a letter to Spalatin he says: 'I am not going to ask you a riddle out of the Scriptures, but a straightforward question, which can be solved by secular

study. If Christ is the Way, the Truth, and the Life, what did mankind do through all the centuries before his birth? Were they fast bound in the gross darkness of ignorance, or had they a share in truth and in salvation? I will come to your help with my own view of the matter. Christ's religion did not begin with his incarnation, but was already in existence before all the centuries, as was Christ himself. For what else is the true Christ, the actual Son of God, than, as St. Paul says, the Wisdom of God, which was not only present with the Jews in the small corner of Syria, but also with the Greeks, the Italians, and the Germans, although they all had different forms of religion? Cain brought offerings of the fruits of the earth, Abel of the first-born among the cattle. What other forms of thank-offering other regions of the earth presented to the Deity you can read for yourself. The commandment of God which gives light unto the soul has two heads: Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, and Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. By fulfilling this law we are made partakers of the kingdom of heaven: this is the natural law, not graven in stone, like that of Moses; not cut in brass, like that of Rome; not written on parchment or on paper; but instilled into our hearts by the highest of teachers. Whosoever with due piety partakes of this memorable and wholesome Eucharist accomplishes a Divine action. . . . For the true body of Christ is peace and concord, and there can be no nobler sacrifice than mutual love.' In another letter, speaking of the impending Easter festival, he writes: 'Our Saviour is the Lamb and the Shepherd. But who is our Saviour? Righteousness, peace, and joy. That is the Christ who has come

down from heaven. The kingdom of God is not meat and drink. The veritable Christ is soul and spirit which can neither be touched with the hands nor seen with the eyes.'

With regard to the Bible he held the opinion that the authors of the sacred narrative had wrapped up all manner of mysteries in riddles and metaphors; that the Jewish writers dealt as copiously in fables as Apuleius and Aesop; he even went so far as to think there was deep wisdom in the opinion of the Mahomedans that Christ was not crucified himself, but some other man who bore a strong resemblance to him. His notions of the Deity were very confused. 'There is only one God and one goddess,' so he once taught a friend, 'but there are as many names as deities—for instance, Jupiter, Sol, Apollo, Moses, Christ, Luna, Ceres, Proserpine, Tellus, Mary. But beware of repeating this. These things must be wrapped in silence, like the Eleusinian mysteries. In matters of religion we must make use of the mask of fables and enigmas. Let us, by the grace of Jupiter—that is, of the best and highest God—despise the lesser gods. When I say Jupiter, I mean Christ and the true God. But enough of these all too lofty things.' 'Mysteries ought not to be made common,' he says in another place. 'We must keep silence concerning them, or else present them under the cloak of fable and allegory, so as not to cast pearls before swine. It is for this reason that Christ left no written record behind him, and that the men who wrote the Gospel histories made such extensive use of parables. Theodot, the tragedy-writer, was robbed of his eyes when he once presumed to turn into a fable some incident out of the Jewish mysteries.'

From remarks of this sort it is evident that Mutian, to the distress of his fellow prebendaries, must have held back from the sacrifice of the Holy Mass and from receiving the Holy Communion. We learn further that he considered the service of the altar as waste of time, that he rejected auricular confession, called the Mendicant Friars 'hooded monsters' and lenten diet 'fools' diet.' Only fools, he said, look for salvation in fasting. 'The priests,' he complained, 'are not satisfied with mortifying our bodies by fasts; they torment our souls also by retailing to their congregations what they have done that deserves to be cursed.' 'I always laughed right heartily,' he wrote to the humanist Petrejus Eberbach, 'when Benedictus used to tell of the complaints of your mother that you so seldom went to church, that you would not fast, and that you would eat eggs contrary to the general custom. I used to excuse these unprecedented crimes by saying, "Petrejus shows great wisdom in not going to church, for the building might fall in, the galleries tumble down; it is a very dangerous place. Besides it's only the priests who get any money for going; the laity get nothing but salt and water, like the goats. That's why we call the people a 'flock,' for a flock is a collection of sheep and goats. As to fasting, of course Petrejus hates it, and with good reason; he knows what happened to his father: he fasted and died. Had he gone on eating as he had been in the habit of doing, he would not have died."' 'When Benedictus heard this,' Mutian goes on, 'he frowned angrily and said, "Who will absolve all you bad Christians?" "Study and learning," I answered.' 'At this moment,' he once wrote concerning the service

in the choir, 'I am called away by a tinkling bell to a pious murmuring, like a Cappadocian fire-worshipper.'

'Amongst the books which Mutian was in the habit of recommending to his friends were the 'Humorous Anecdotes' of the humanist Heinrich Bebel, of Tübingen, a collection in Latin of all sorts of scurrilous, satirical, and even blasphemous anecdotes, tales, and jests. Bebel's sceptical scorn was hurled not only at the scandalous lives of the clergy, at fasts and other church ordinances, at the sale of indulgences and the worship of relics, but at many of the fundamental doctrines of Christianity itself. He speaks in the coarsest manner of the Trinity and the scheme of redemption, and ridicules the Christian's consolation in the sufferings of the body. That outward respect for current church doctrine was sometimes paid in spite of anti-scriptural opinions is shown by an anecdote from the life of Peter Linden, who, on being taken to task for ridiculing the doctrine of the Trinity, answered: Oh well, I will not persist obstinately in my opinion; and rather than make acquaintance with the martyr's fire I will believe in a 'Quadrinity.'

'Make haste and get Bebel's "Facetiae,"' writes Mutian to Herebord von der Marthen. 'There is no doubt that coarse anecdotes have great influence on people. They arrest attention, they go straight to the mark, and they stick in the memory.' He expressed a desire to publish such a collection himself.

The personal influence that Mutian exercised over the humanists who frequented his house corresponded with the spirit that characterises his letters. Irreverent jesting against sacred things was encouraged, and we

read that in conversation with Mutian and his associates, and to the general satisfaction of the company, Crotus Rubianus used to call the Holy Mass a popish comedy, the holy relics ravens' bones,[1] and the prayers at canonical hours a mere baying of hounds. He used to say that Cicero was a saintly apostle and a greater Roman hierarch than Pope Leo X.

This contemptuous bearing towards the Church and its sacred teaching was often accompanied by unlimited license in conduct. Concerning the sexual transgressions of his friends Mutian was wont to speak with a cynicism compared with which the erotic writers of antiquity seem almost chaste. Even the seduction and carrying off of a nun was treated by him as a good joke.

It is not to be wondered at that in Erfurt and Gotha, and in all places where the later humanists preached the new gospel of classicism and tried to win disciples to their cause, men of earnest lives and strong Church principles should have fought shy of them and opposed them. In many cases this antagonism went to the length of hostility to all poetic culture. The new gospel was judged by the lives of its apostles, and by the spiritual fruit which they brought to the market, and which was for the most part worthless or poisonous.

'It does not surprise me,' writes Cochlaeus, 'that so many people should have become decided antagonists of humanistic studies who formerly befriended and encouraged them. For what good is done by all these "poets" who tramp about Germany as play-actors and swashbucklers? Wherever they go they stir up strife

[1] That is, skeletons left on the gallows for the ravens to peck at.

and enmity; their manners, to put it mildly, are loose and free; only in exceptional cases does one find in them any reverence for what is sacred and venerable; their sole delight is to insult and ridicule existing institutions, and any one who refuses help in overthrowing the latter is regarded by them as a barbarian.'

Germany was completely overrun with literary parasites, charlatans, and lampoonists, who made the vilification of the Church and the clergy and the monastic orders a special branch of their newly acquired 'culture.'

It was thus inevitable that the monks should be the enemies *par excellence* of the 'poets;' nor is it to be wondered at that in a struggle grounded on mutual suspicion and intolerance, often wilfully ignorant from fear of false knowledge, the limits of moderation should frequently have been far overstepped.

In lecture halls and pulpits the monks and the scholastic theologians thundered against the 'poets' as the representatives of unchristian learning which set more store by fine language than by the truth of God; as the promoters of a system of study which lured the young away from all useful and solid intellectual work. They denounced them as godless people steeped in paganism. The time was now unfortunately fulfilled, said preachers and lecturers, in which, according to the prediction of the apostle, 'men would turn away their ears from the truth and be turned unto fables.' Hence there was most urgent need to put an end to this state of things. The preaching of the Gospel had never consisted in fine words of human wisdom; the corrupt-

ing study of heathen poets and writers must be entirely forbidden to the young. 'That stream must be stopped at its source,' said a Dominican preacher at Cologne in 1516, 'which is pouring its poisonous waters over the rising generation.' Shall we any longer allow the young of our land to be led away by men who do not scruple to put into their hands the most indecent poets of antiquity, who explain these poets by indecent glossaries, and spice their instruction with gibes and satires against the Church and the Pope; by men who rate the Bible no higher than the heathen writings, and who have the audacity to say that more good may be learnt from the latter than from the Holy Scriptures? Let us banish all these 'poets' from our schools, the old and the new alike, for the new are more dangerous even than the old.

A sect considered specially dangerous among the holders of these new opinions were those 'poet' humanists who posed under the mask of theology, and who exercised an influence similar to that of Erasmus, aiming, like him, at throwing contempt on scholastic learning as such.[1] It was to this class that Mutian belonged.

He was among the most violent enemies of scholasticism. He described the war between the humanists and the schoolmen as 'a struggle between light and darkness,' and he inspired the whole body of humanists under his lead with the profoundest aversion for what he called 'that arrogant, extortionate, irascible race of sophists.' Many of his own poems,

[1] Among the most important pamphlets against the humanists may be reckoned, in this respect, the Dialogue of Jacobus Latomus, Professor at Löwen, *De Tribus Linguis et Ratione Studii Theologici* (Lovaniae, 1519).

of which he made presents to his pupils, breathed the bitterest hatred against scholasticism. The aim of his labours was the complete annihilation of the old schools and of all institutions which had grown up under their influence. The academic degree, on which the sophists based their authority, seemed to him worse than laughable. 'Where reason points the way,' he writes, 'there is no need for "doctors."' Men of real culture ought not to waste their energies on acquiring the empty, barbarian titles of 'bachelors' or 'masters.' The 'school,' he said, is the province of the grammarian; the theologian is quite out of place there.' The 'theological apes' nowadays absorb the whole of the school curriculum into their system, and give out all sorts of nonsense. The right proportions in our university staffs would be one sophist, two mathematicians, three theologians, four lawyers, five 'doctors,' six rhetoricians, seven Hebraists, eight Hellenists, nine grammarians, and ten sound philosophers as heads and principals of the whole learned body.

Nearly all the disciples of Mutian imitated him in ferocious attacks on the sophists and on the professors of the old universities, and the breach between teacher and pupil became wider and wider at Erfurt, as in all the universities where the humanist influence gained ground.

Many of the older professors, who had formerly been promoters of humanism, now took the opposite side and openly declared that the new 'poets' were the ruin of the universities. But Mutian only waxed fiercer and fiercer. 'We have nothing to do,' he said, 'with the opinions of contentious sophists concerning

our young flock.' 'The enemies of the fine arts are accomplishing nothing; whether they will or no the number of our followers goes on increasing.' 'I congratulate the younger professors at Erfurt,' he writes to Herebord von der Marthen, 'for they are setting themselves free from barbarism.' He exhorted the humanists, whom he called his Latin cohorts, to stand firmly together in battle, saying that in a short time he would lead them to victory over the barbarians. 'We must hold out to the end, having once begun this campaign and bound ourselves together by the oaths of soldiers.'

But even before the outbreak of this religious war, a revolutionary rising of the community against the town council took place at Erfurt in the year 1509; and the hostiliity between humanists and scholiasts was transferred to political platforms. The older professors, with Henning Goede at their head, ranged themselves on the side of the town council, while the humanists showed decided sympathy with the resistance of the popular party. Mutian, already before bitterly incensed against Goede, who as a thorough-going German objected strongly to the humanist contempt for his native language and literature, now discharged volley after volley of insults on the scholiasts. With curious ingenuity he proved all German jurisprudence and all the civic laws of the country to have come down from antiquity, especially from the code of Solon; and by arguments from the ancient classics he convinced his humanist friends of the justice of the popular claims. 'It was madness,' he wrote, 'to believe that princes must always be born such; they often sprang from the lowest ranks of

society. Socrates had long ago said that we should have better rulers if we chose them for ourselves. In his letters he inveighed fiercely against the adherents of the town party, and expressed his delight at the poems in which the humanists vented their popular sympathies. Only they must take care not to endanger their own personal safety; he himself always endeavoured to avoid all risk. Herebord von der Marthen was the only one of the humanist body who took an active part in the fight. Constant scenes of tumult threw all the town business and proceedings into confusion. A quarrel among the students, which broke out in 1510, resulted in the destruction by the enraged populace of the university building, with its ancient records and charters, the splendid library, and even the colleges and 'Bursas.'[1] In the destruction of the colleges, in which the young of successive generations had so long been kept together in order and discipline, the more keen-sighted observers of later times rightly discerned the cause of the internal decay of the university. Amongst the emancipated students, given over to self-government, who went forth in bands from the ruins of the university, unrestrained license rapidly gained ground.

Mutian's band of humanists also became scattered over all parts of Germany, and wherever they went they preached the gospel according to their master, spread enmity against the 'barbarians,' enrolled fresh recruits in their own ranks, and returned to Erfurt towards the end of 1512 strengthened for the conflict.

The warfare was soon to spread all over Germany,

[1] 'Bursa,' an educational establishment with foundations for the support of scholars.—TRANSLATOR.

and to secure the victory of light over the darkness of the monks and theologians.

The immediate provocative to the outbreak of hostilities was the controversy of Reuchlin with the Cologne theologians.

The Reuchlin Controversy

Johann Reuchlin was among the first leaders of thought in Germany who by example and speech, and by constantly pointing out the importance of the study of Greek literature, procured for the Greek language a place in the higher branches of university curriculums. He also rendered substantial service to the cause of Latin study by his Latin dictionary and his translations of the Greek classics into Latin. But his labours in the department of the Hebrew language constitute the most important of all his achievements. It is to him that we owe the first complete system of instruction in Hebrew. It was his wish by means of Hebraistic research, and by throwing open the original text of the Old Testament, to furnish a healthy counterpoise to the excessive worship of pagan antiquity; for it seemed to him that in the engrossing study of rhetoric and poetry the Holy Scriptures were in danger not only of suffering neglect but of being altogether despised by many people.[1]

As in the study of classical literature, however, so also in that of the Hebrew there were dangers of a special kind. Reuchlin was by nature strongly predisposed

[1] See our statements concerning Reuchlin, vol. i. (9th–12th editions) pp. 88–91, (13th edition) pp. 92–94, (15th and 16th editions) pp. 101–103; English translation, i. 102–105. (Readers are referred for full notes on this controversy to pp. 40–56 of the German original.—TRANSLATOR.)

to mysticism, and he soon began to use his knowledge of the Hebrew tongue as a key to the strange world of Cabbalistic lore. The man who influenced him most powerfully in this respect was Pico della Mirandola, who had been the first to procure admission for the Cabbala into the circles of learned men, and who speaks of it in terms of the highest veneration. 'No systems of science or learning,' he says, 'make us feel so certain of the divinity of Christ as do the Cabbala and natural magic.' Reuchlin adds the following to this testimony: 'The one aim and object of the Cabbalists is to raise the spirit of man up to God, and to endow it with complete beatitude. All who pursue the study of this science obtain in this life the highest happiness, and in the life to come everlasting joy.'

In two works, entitled respectively 'De Verbo Mirifico' ('Of the Wonder-working Word') and 'De Arte Cabbalistica' ('Of the Cabbalistic Art'), Reuchlin lays the basis of a semi-supernatural, semi-rationalistic theosophy. His leading idea in both books is that the visible world is the image or reflection of an invisible one with which it stands in the most intimate correlation. Allied with this idea is the belief in the magic power of terrestrial elements over their corresponding forces in the celestial world.

Especial efficacy is assigned to those letters of Holy Writ which individually are in miraculous union with the individual angels who carry on the government of the nether world. At the utterance of certain words God is beheld by our minds, and as it were reproduced within us. Reuchlin justifies the mystic, Cabbalistic interpretation of the five books of Moses by the argument that if there were no mystic wisdom con-

cealed in these books they would have no higher value than other books whose contents are equally moral and didactic. The art of arranging the letters of Holy Writ in magic order was, he asserted, conferred on Moses by the Almighty; from Moses it came down to Christ, from Christ, by transmission, to the seventy translators, and from them to the company of the esoterics. Reuchlin's estimate of Pythagoras as a man in almost every respect at one with Christian belief is quite consistent with these opinions. According to Pythagorean philosophy, he says, faith must not be subjected to any operation of logic, for mankind will never attain to a clear apprehension of the basis of religion by mere processes of thought; hence religion has never presented itself as a product of human speculation, but always as a divine revelation.

Reuchlin was far from any wish to injure the cause of Christianity and the Church by his mysto-philosophical system; on the contrary he imagined that he had struck new light out of the Hebrew books for the better understanding of Christianity.

His opinions, however, even if regarded as mere philosophy only, were well calculated to turn men's brains, especially as they gave great encouragement to the tendency already strong in mankind to put oneself in immediate connection with the spirit-world. Mutian was delighted with the 'De Verbo Mirifico,' and expressed the hope that Reuchlin would accomplish all that Pico della Mirandola had predicted.[1] Cornelius Agrippa delivered lectures on this 'Christian and catholic work.'

Several theologians, on the other hand, spoke

[1] Reuchlin's Correspondence, p. 84.

disparagingly of it. 'In reading Reuchlin's books,' wrote John Colet, 'one is made to feel as if the magic lay more in the words than in the things; there must be rare secrets indeed contained in the Hebrew letters and signs! Ah me, of such books and such wisdom there is no end! There is nothing better for us in this brief span of time than to live purely and nobly, to strive daily after perfection, and to seek indeed to attain that which these Pythagorean Cabbalists hold out before us, but which we can only lay hold of by fervent love to Jesus and by imitation of his example.'

In serious apprehension of another invasion of Judaism the Dominican monk Jacob Hoogstraten, professor of theology at Cologne, and religious inquisitor of the provinces of Cologne, Mayence, and Treves, entered the lists against Reuchlin in a pamphlet entitled 'Destruction of the Cabbala,' in which he showed that the Jewish mystics did not support the articles of the Christian faith, but, on the contrary, denied their truth, and that Reuchlin's book was full of errors.

When Reuchlin's 'De Arte Cabbalistica' and Hoogstraten's confutation of it appeared a lengthy controversy on the question of the Hebrew books was already in full swing. At the beginning of it Reuchlin had astonished his contemporaries by taking part with the opponents of the Jews. At the instigation of a certain nobleman he published, in 1505, a 'missive' with the title 'Why did the Jews remain so long in Captivity?' In this pamphlet he explained that the captivity and exile of the Jews, lasting more than 1,300 years, was a just punishment for the godless crime they had committed against the Saviour of the

world. This sin of theirs, he said, continued perpetually, so that day after day they were guilty of fresh blasphemy, reviling and dishonouring God in the Person of His Son, our Lord Jesus, the true Messiah. 'They call him,' says Reuchlin, 'a criminal, a sorcerer, a malefactor. The gracious Virgin, his mother, they call "Haria," and the Apostles and disciples heretics, and all of us Christians they call "outcasts"[1] and foolish heathens.' All Jews, up to the present time, so long as they continued to be Jews, he said, were participators in this blasphemy towards God, and took a peculiar delight in inventing fresh ways of harming Christians. This was manifest in all their proceedings and in their daily prayers; in their books also, which are written and read out against us. 'The worst part of it is that the Jews will not recognise that all this, which is committed against our Lord Jesus, is sin and wickedness, for in this way they cannot come to any recognition of their wrong-doing or improvement of their lives. And so long as they remain altogether stiff-necked in their sins they must also continue in durance and exile. I pray God that He will enlighten them and turn them back to the true faith, that so they may be set free from the yoke of the devil, as the community of the Christian Church pray devoutly for them every Good Friday; and if they would recognise Jesus as the true Messiah it would be well with them here in this world and in the world to come for ever.' He concludes with the following generous offer: 'If there is any Jew who would like to be instructed concerning the Messiah and our true faith, I will willingly receive such a one and provide for him, so

[1] 'Unvolk.'

that he may have no anxiety for temporal necessities, but may be able to serve God peaceably and in freedom from care.'

The conversion of the Jews then could only be hoped for, so the theologians and canonists had repeatedly declared, when they cast off their grasping spirit, earned their living, like Christian citizens, by honest trades and industries, and were compelled to surrender all those anti-Christian books by which hatred of Christianity was continually kept alive—above all the Talmud. In several pamphlets published between the years 1507 and 1509 the converted Jew, Johannes Pfefferkorn, urged the above demands anew, and in perfect good faith, against his former co-religionists.

In the first of these, the 'Judenspiegel,' he began by a resolute condemnation of the persecution of the Jews, and defended them against the crimes laid to their charge, especially the accusation that they were obliged to use Christian blood for their sacrifices, and for this purpose to slaughter young Christian children. 'Well-beloved Christians,' he exclaims, 'I entreat you to give no credence to this!' He urged that the persecutions which the Jews underwent deterred them from adopting Christianity. Having thus done justice to the Jewish side of the question, he went on to insist that the Jews must renounce the practice of usury, earn their bread by honourable work, attend sermons at stated times to hear the Word of God preached, and, above all, give up the Talmudic books. In a later pamphlet he declared that 'from the way in which these blind Jews kept the Easter festival' they could no longer be followers of Moses, but were mere Talmudists, repudiators of the Old and

the New Testaments, and deserving of condemnation according to Mosaic law. The Talmud, which was their seducer, must be taken from them, and then they would soon change in heart and mind. In this pamphlet, as well as in two others, the 'Judenbeicht' and the 'Judenfeind,' he described, in terms of strong condemnation, the wanton wickedness of the Jews towards the Christians, and exhorted the latter not to tolerate the Jews amongst them in their present reprobate condition, for they were cursers of Jesus Christ and his blessed Mother. He did not, however, go so far as to demand the banishment or extermination of the Jews; he only asked that the measures proposed above should be adopted and enforced. If, however, the magistrates, bribed, possibly, by gifts of money from the Jews, refused this petition of the Christians, he advised the latter to have recourse to prayer to God, and also to make appeal to other Christian rulers.

Of these the Emperor was the highest, and to him Pfefferkorn himself resolved to turn for help. Through the instrumentality of several monasteries of the Dominican Order, which protected the Christians zealously against Jewish usury and advocated the suppression of Jewish books, Pfefferkorn obtained letters of recommendation to the Emperor Maximilian's sister Kunigunde, widow of Albrecht, Duke of Bavaria, and the Duchess, approving of his scheme, recommended him to her brother. On August 15, 1509, Maximilian issued an injunction to all the Jews of the Empire to the effect that they were to bring all and any of their books which were directed against the Christian religion or against their own Mosaic law before Johannes Pfefferkorn, 'as our servant and loyal

subject of the realm, and as a well-established and learned believer of our faith.' Pfefferkorn was invested with authority to take all these books from the Jews and confiscate them, albeit in every place with knowledge and discretion, and in the presence of the priest and two members of the town council or magistracy.

By a later decree Maximilian transferred the management of the whole business to Uriel, Archbishop of Mayence, and commissioned him to examine the books which Pfefferkorn had already seized in different places, and to collect the opinions of the universities of Mayence, Cologne, Erfurt, and Heidelberg, as well as those of the chief inquisitor, Jacob Hoogstraten, of Cologne, of the priest Victor of Carbes, and of Johann Reuchlin.

Reuchlin's opinion was more favourable for the Jews than might have been expected from his 'Missive.' It was to the effect that, according to law, only the manifestly libellous books could be destroyed, and that all others must be preserved. As for the Talmud, Christ himself had enjoined the preservation of these books, because in them also evidence for the Christian faith could be found. As regards the occult portions of the Talmud there was no justification for destroying even these, because superstition and error must be mixed up with human reason, in order to the strengthening and testing of true believers.

The opinions of the four universities were all different. Heidelberg arrived at no decided verdict, but appointed a committee of learned men to consider the question. Erfurt pronounced that the Emperor, and each of the princes in his own dominion, ought themselves to take away from the Jews all books of

theirs which libelled the Christian religion. Mayence insisted on the suppression of all Jewish books, and for the present even their Bibles, because there was ground for suspicion that they had been falsified wherever passages favourable to Christianity occurred. Cologne was in favour of leaving the Bible to the Jews, but not the books of the Talmud, the burning of which had already been ordered by several popes. Hoogstraten and Victor of Carbes agreed with this last opinion.

In November 1510 the collective opinions were, by order of the Archbishop of Mayence, presented by Pfefferkorn to the Emperor, who was then at Freiburg. Maximilian handed the documents over for decision to three theologians, among whom was the famous Carthusian prior Gregory Reisch.[1] The verdict of these theologians accorded with that of the Cologne University. The Bible might be left in the Jews' possession without danger, but all the rest of their books must be taken from them, whether or no they were works which might be of use to the Christian religion or to the Jews themselves. The books were to be collected all over the world by the archbishops, bishops, and other ecclesiastical commissioners, with the help of certain lay officers; they were then to be examined by men versed in the Latin and Hebrew tongues; those pronounced harmless, restored to the Jews, and the remainder either burnt or divided among Christian libraries for the use of students.

But all this great book question came to no issue. The Emperor declared himself satisfied with the opinions, but would not act on the final decision

[1] See our statements, vol. i. (9th–12th ed.) p. 103, (13th ed.) p. 106, (15th and 16th ed.) p. 115 (English Translation, i. 121, 122).

without the concurrence of the Diet. Nevertheless the case never came on at any later Diet.[1]

With this question of the Hebrew books, however, there came to be associated a controversy of the greatest importance for the intellectual and religious life of the nation.

In his statement of opinion concerning the Jews' books Reuchlin had made a personal attack on Pfefferkorn, had called him an 'ass' who understood nothing whatever about the books whose destruction he was advocating, and had indulged in innuendoes against the rascally fellows who had adopted Christianity from base motives. These insults had not been intended for publication, and Pfefferkorn had only come to know of them in his official capacity, but nevertheless he animadverted upon them in the most violent manner in his 'Handspiegel,' published in 1511, as an offence against his personal character. Reuchlin, in his 'Augenspiegel,' answered with still greater violence; calling Pfefferkorn a base, dishonourable villain, a man cursed with a devil's nature. He took the opportunity also of disclosing in this publication, amongst other things, the memorandum of advice he had drawn up for the Emperor about the Jewish books, with an explanation of it.[2]

Neither Pfefferkorn's 'Handspiegel' nor Reuchlin's 'Augenspiegel' was of the nature of a party propaganda, but consisted solely of personal attacks; the Cologne theologians had no part in the 'Handspiegel,' nor Reuchlin's humanist followers in the 'Augenspiegel,'

[1] See Geiger's *Life of Reuchlin*, pp. 216–240.

[2] The most impartial and exhaustive account of this controversy is given in L. Geiger's *Life of Reuchlin*. (For full notes on this controversy see German original, 17th and 18th ed., vol. ii. pp. 46 to 55.)

but on the strength of these pamphlets the two hostile camps were soon formed.

The 'Augenspiegel,' which appeared in 1511 at the Frankfort autumn fair, caused the greatest excitement, and was soon distributed all over Germany.

On the pretext that this pamphlet contained false and anti-Church teaching the Frankfort clergyman Meyer, by order, as he said, of Uriel, Archbishop of Mayence, sent a copy of it to the Theological Faculty of Cologne, which, by papal authority, possessed the supreme right of censure in Germany. Just as at that period the University of Cologne, with its two thousand students, still held the first place in size, importance, and fame among Rhenish universities, so the Cologne Theological Faculty stood at the head of all the Theological Faculties of Germany.[1] The most distinguished of its members were Arnold von Tungern, the head of the Laurentine Bursa, and the two Dominican monks Conrad Köllin and Jacob Hoogstraten.

As soon as Reuchlin learnt that his book was to be criticised by Arnold von Tungern he wrote to him, on October 28, 1511, that he considered himself fortunate in having assigned to him a judge who was himself a distinguished scholar and a venerator of learning, and who made allowances for human weakness; that in setting forth his opinion he had had no intention whatever of hurting anybody's feelings, still

[1] This statement concerning a supreme right of censorship, bestowed by Papal authority on the Theological Faculty of Cologne, is certainly incorrect. All that is true is that the Cologne Dominican Prior 'ab immemorabili tempore fuerit et sit inquisitor apostolicus haeret. pravitatis per Moguntinam, Treverensem et Coloniensem provincias.' See Hansen, *Rheinische Acten zur Geschichte des Jesuitenordens* (Bonn 1896), p. 566. This explains why the Archbishop of Mayence referred the Frankfort clergyman to the Cologne Faculty, in which the Dominican Prior, as nquisitor apostolicus, always played a prominent part.—EDITOR.

less of offending a university; that he honoured learning, and above all theology, but that he had never studied this subject himself, and that he quoted theological extracts in his writings much in the same way as a country clergyman might talk of medicine in his sermons. If he had made mistakes he begged that they might be pointed out to him, and he would be ready to correct them; for in all points he wished to continue firm in his obedience to the Church and to preserve his faith unspotted.' In a letter to Cöllin, with whom he had long been on friendly terms, Reuchlin expressed himself in a similar strain. Cöllin replied on January 2, 1512, that it was not surprising that a doctor of law should make mistakes in theology; that the Faculty would send him the objectionable passages, pointing out what they wished altered in them.

The Faculty thereupon addressed a letter to Reuchlin, representing to him that by the publication of his opinion he had thwarted the Emperor's proceedings against the Jewish books, and laid himself under suspicions of favouring Jewish heresy; his 'Augenspiegel,' published in the German language, was being read and distributed by the Jews, who were delighted that so learned a man as Reuchlin had taken up their cause, and was protecting their writings against Christ and the Christian Faith; that in support of his opinions he had perverted and misquoted passages from Holy Writ, and had furthermore been guilty of many objectionable and scandalous assertions, whereby he had cast doubts on his own orthodoxy. It was with great pleasure, however, that the Faculty learned from his letters to Tungern and Cöllin that he wished to persevere in the faith, and that he was ready to correct any erroneous matter. They herewith sent

him a list of incorrect assertions and passages that he had perverted, and they begged him to recast them in more accurate language, or else, after the example of the humble-minded Augustine, to retract them altogether.

After such conciliatory explanations on both sides one might have expected a peaceful settlement of the matter. But nothing of the kind happened.

'Within a few months,' so wrote Hoogstraten later on, 'Reuchlin, under the influence of men who loved controversy and hated the Church, completely changed his attitude and his language.' On March 12, 1512, Reuchlin had said in a letter to Cöllin that 'it was not he (Reuchlin) who had begun the contention, but the Cologne theologians, or rather that baptised Jew goaded on by them; he had been betrayed and sold, but he feared nothing, for he had powerful friends amongst nobles and commoners, and it would cause a tremendous sensation if an orator with the power of a Demosthenes should set to work to unravel the tangled threads of this transaction, and reveal to the world who among those concerned in it were friends of Jesus Christ and who were friends only of the purse. 'And among the number of my powerful protectors,' he added emphatically, 'would be the poets and the historians, numbers of whom honour me, as they should, as their former teacher. These men would keep in everlasting recollection the memory of so great a wrong committed against me by my enemies, and would hold me up as an innocent man, to the eternal shame of your great university.'

In a later pamphlet, written in German, Reuchlin maintained all these objectionable passages and attacked the Cologne Faculty indirectly by spiteful insinuations.

The Cologne theologians, however, were anxious to keep the people in ignorance of this controversy, and accordingly Arnold von Tungern drew up an answer in Latin, and attempted to expose Reuchlin's heterodox opinions. This pamphlet was on the whole moderate, and in the dedication to the Emperor, Von Tungern said that he had written thus against Reuchlin because the latter in his 'Augenspiegel' had favoured the Jews unjustly and had encouraged them in their antagonism to the Christians; and also because Reuchlin had not kept his promise and withdrawn the objectionable passages pointed out to him, but had tried to intimidate the Cologne theologians by the threat that he had a strong host at his back to support him. They were not, however, to be frightened by menaces.

Pfefferkorn took a different line. Incensed by the insults of Reuchlin, who had spoken of him in his last pamphlet as a man who took a strange delight in lying, he made a violent attack on the great Hebraist in his 'Brandspiegel.' The angry scholar was all the more infuriated by this step because on October 7, 1512, the Emperor Maximilian had issued a prohibition against the 'Augenspiegel' and had ordered its seizure on pain of heavy punishment.

Reuchlin now published a 'Defence against his Cologne Calumniators,' which was one of the most violent specimens of the party polemics of the day. 'It was not zeal for the Faith,' he declared in his dedication to the Emperor, 'that had moved the Cologne theologians to proceed against him, but a desire to injure and annihilate him personally. His opponents were not theologians, but theologists, men who were concerned not with the establishment of truth, but with

empty verbal disputations; men who, far from striving after moral purity, defiled themselves with scandal of all sorts. Moreover it was his experience of old that the just were always persecuted by the unjust. Homer himself had had to fight an unworthy opponent; there was always a swarm of vilifiers at the heels of every man of note. The Jewish-book question had only been taken up thus by the Cologne theologians in order to extort money from the Jews. 'They hunger and thirst after Jewish gold,' he said; 'may it be showered on them! They may banish or burn every Jew in the country for all I care, so long as they leave me in peace and quiet.'

The accusation against him of having falsely interpreted certain passages of the Bible and of the classical writings, he declared to be quite unjustifiable. It was allowable to explain such passages in a different sense from that in which they had been written and understood by the authors; to recast the meaning, as it were, provided the natural signification was not made to suffer by the process. The reproach of 'perverting meanings' came strangely, he said, from the lips of men like his opponents, who were incapable of either understanding or appreciating either the Bible or the classical writings. Apart altogether from their deficiencies of scholarship and knowledge, the simple processes of accurate thought were unknown to them; they were wanting in understanding of logic; they could not follow his arguments, and distorted them in order to refute them. And they were not only wanting in the capacity for understanding him, but also in the wish to do so. He called them 'foolish sheep, bucks, sows, pigs,' said they were less human than wild beasts, that they were scholars of the

devil, frequenters of the lower regions, animated by fiendish pride, and so on through all the vocabulary of opprobrious invective that he could muster, and then ended by saying: 'They would wonder that he had dealt so mildly with his enemies, that he had borne their insults without rejoinder, that he had not met their fury with fury, their contempt with contempt, their calumnies with calumnious retorts, but he would scorn to act in the same manner that they had.' He prayed God to save them from the torments of hell. His sole revenge would be to hand down to posterity the name of his adversary hewn thus in marble: 'Arnold von Tungern, slanderer and vilifier.' [1]

It is to the credit of Pfefferkorn that after he had received Reuchlin's insulting letter he sought him out at Stuttgardt in order to confront him in a court of justice before his prince, the Duke of Württemberg. But he never met him.

The Emperor, to whom Reuchlin had sent his pamphlet, issued the following edict from Coblenz on July 9, 1513: 'Whereas on the occasion of some proceedings begun by him (the Emperor) against the Jewish books, but left only half completed, owing to pressing business, certain pamphlets had been published by Reuchlin, which were opposed to the Emperor's undertaking, and especially a more recent one, which had heaped insults on the Dominicans of Cologne, and on Arnold von Tungern in particular; and whereas this last pamphlet was calculated to stir up ill-feeling among the people—he (the Emperor) commissioned the Archbishops of Cologne,

[1] From Geiger's *Life of Reuchlin*, pp. 272–278. In the polemical art Reuchlin was the precursor of Luther, little as he was inclined, as will be shown later, to proceed against the Church in Luther's spirit.

Mayence, and Treves, and the Chief Inquisitor, to see that wherever this said pamphlet was discovered it was instantly seized and its sale prevented.'[1] The Theological Faculties of Louvain, Cologne, Mayence, Erfurt, and Paris also condemned the 'Augenspiegel.'

The Chief Inquisitor, Hoogstraten, commenced proceedings against Reuchlin.[2]

Reuchlin appealed to Pope Leo X. against the edict for the suppression of his book, and in order to secure a favourable hearing at the Court of Rome he addressed a most servile letter to Leo's Jewish physician in ordinary, Bonet de Lates. He explained that, in opposition to the verdict of the Cologne Faculty, which had condemned the Jewish books to be destroyed, he had defended their utility; and that was the reason why the Dominicans of Cologne hated and persecuted him.

The Pope handed the matter over to the young Bishop of Spires, George, Count Palatine, who, on his part, having little knowledge of the subject under dispute, commissioned his prebendary, George Truchsess, a pupil of Reuchlin's, to determine the rights of it. The verdict of the latter was as follows: 'That the "Augenspiegel" was quite free from heresy, was neither slanderous nor irreverent, nor too friendly to the Jews, and that it might safely be distributed and read everywhere; that Hoogstraten had been unfair to it, and that he should be punished by a fine and bound over to silence on the subject for evermore.'

Hoogstraten in his turn then appealed to the Pope,

[1] Geiger's *Life of Reuchlin*, pp. 279–281.

[2] Concerning these proceedings only the one-sided accounts of Reuchlin and his friends have hitherto become known.

and the latter appointed Cardinal Grimani to be the judge. In June 1514 Grimani summoned the contending parties to Rome.

"Hoogstraten was to appear in person, but Reuchlin, on account of his age, might be represented by his counsel. Hoogstraten responded at once to the summons, but the case dragged on from year to year. In vain the Archduke Carl, afterwards Emperor, represented to the Pope in 1515 that the mischief only increased the longer the settlement of the case was delayed; that a decision ought to be arrived at speedily, in order to avert the ruin of the Christian population, and to clear away all stumbling-blocks from the paths of the weaker brethren.

Reuchlin had influential patrons at Rome, both secular and clerical.[1] The Pope, foreseeing no danger, remained inactive.

In Germany, however, that which the Cologne theologians had predicted in 1514 had meanwhile come to pass. 'If the levity of the "poets" in these matters which concern the Faith is not checked,' the theologians had written, 'they will grow more and more unscrupulous in attacking the truths of theology.'

While the older humanists, such as Jacob Wimpheling and Sebastian Brant,[2] although on friendly terms with Reuchlin, in no way concurred in these proceedings of his, the 'poets,' or younger humanists, on the contrary, rallied round him in large numbers and urged him forward to the fight. It was owing to

[1] Among these patrons was Stephan Rosinus, chaplain to the Emperor Maximilian, and his agent in Rome.

[2] See Schmidt, notice on Sebastian Brant in the *Revue d'Alsace*, nouvelle série, iii. 41–42.

their influence, indeed, that this formerly grave and dignified scholar changed both his attitude and his language, and used weapons against the Cologne theologians which were otherwise foreign to his nature and character.

These 'poets,' now banded together for the first time in a close federation, made use of the Reuchlin complications in their warfare against Church authority, against clerical scholastic learning, and above all against the Dominican Orders, whose members perpetuated in all the universities the traditional learning of the schoolmen.

Their campaign against these monks was greatly assisted by their publishing abroad in Latin and German pamphlets the story of a crime which four Dominicans had committed by means of sham spiritual apparitions, mechanically contrived. The case had been brought before the ecclesiastical court and conducted by the Bishops of Lausanne and Sitten and a legate appointed by Pope Julius II., and sentence of death pronounced. The monks had then been stripped of their sacerdotal garb in the open market-place by the legate, had been pronounced unworthy of their priestly dignity, and handed over to the arm of the secular law for execution. This scandalous incident was now used also against the ecclesiastical dignitaries and the clergy in general.

'All monks and ecclesiastics are liars and deceivers,' cried the 'poets.' 'All men of culture must join in battle against them.'

The generalship of these 'poets' was assumed by Mutian. After having written to Petrejus, in October 1512, that, as Reuchlin's eulogist, he meant to take

up his cause, when Tungern's pamphlet appeared he decided that the time had come when prudence required a change of front.

To his most intimate friends, however, he confessed secretly that the condemnation of Reuchlin appeared to him just; the latter, he said, in his criticism of the Jewish books, had written in a style far more presumptuous than the occasion required; he had collected together odious and criminal matter to support his opinion, and had assumed in the most preposterous manner an air of omniscience.

None the less, however, did Mutian, from hatred of the 'barbarians,' commend most zealously to the favour of the humanists the very cause which he had himself condemned.

'May the gods exterminate the theologians!' he exclaimed to his friends. 'They must not enjoy the protection of the law; they have forfeited every claim to justice.' He enlarged his secret league and wrote to Reuchlin: 'Every day brave youths come pouring in, in whose hearts and mouths your name lives.'[1] All his friends wrote letters to Reuchlin exhorting him to persevere in his attacks on the 'reprobate race of Cologne theologians.' One of them addressed him with the words: 'Holy Father, peace be with thee.' Another called him 'a Hercules victorious over the barbarian monster.' Crotus Rubianus wrote to him in 1514: 'It is, no doubt, through the providence of the gods that this strife has broken out; they delight to strengthen through suffering those whom they love. But be tranquil; you are not alone in the fight. You have on your side the great scholar Mutian; you have

[1] Reuchlin's *Correspondence*, p. 256.

the whole of Mutian's flock—philosophers, orators, poets, theologians—all devoted to you, all ready to fight in your cause. Eobanus is endowed with a divine gift; he is an admired and successful poet. In my friend Ulrich von Hutten fiery zeal is coupled with sagacity. Only speak the word; we are ready to serve you at a moment's notice.' Eobanus composed a poem in praise of Reuchlin, in which he called him 'the tamer of monsters,' and he wrote to him in 1515: 'The senate of the republic of learning has decreed your triumph. May the gods destroy the wicked ones and wipe their memory from the face of the earth! They deserve that all good men should hate them, for they are not only persecutors of learning, but also corrupters of divine religion. I have just polished off some slashing iambics against those Cologne demons—that's what you call them, is it not?—and am going to write some more and send them to you when the time comes. I take courage at the thought that I do not stand alone. I have hopes that Hutten, Busch, Crotus, and Spalatin, and your countrymen Philomusus and Melanchthon, and a good many others besides, will join with me in the pæan of victory.' 'Your enemies,' wrote Hermann van dem Busch to Reuchlin after the decision of the Bishop of Spires, 'look the very picture of frantic envy and hatred. They roll their eyes, gnash their teeth, groan and sigh. Be of good courage, I say once more; you will soon see all the malice of your adversaries confounded.' Ulrich von Hutten wrote to him in the same encouraging strain on January 13, 1517. 'Be calm,' he says; 'I am gathering associates to the cause, whose age and circumstances are equal to the

occasion. You will soon look out from a 'house of laughter' on the melancholy tragedy of your fallen enemies. Take heart, take heart; a train is being laid which at the auspicious moment will kindle into a conflagration.'

Ulrich von Hutten, scion of a Franconian knightly family, was born in 1488 at the castle of Steckelberg. It was his father's wish that he should be dedicated to the Church, and in his eleventh year he was placed at the monastic school of Fulda to be educated. In 1504 or 1505, however, at the instigation of Crotus Rubianus, he ran away from Fulda, and for many years led the life of a travelling *Literat*, going from one university to another in North and South Germany, and visiting also the universities of Italy, often in extreme poverty and presenting the most wretched appearance. Owing to dissolute living he remained a prey to ill-health from the year 1508; he suffered tortures from painful ulcers, and was often reduced to such a pitiable condition that a friend once advised him to commit suicide. He was utterly wanting in moral discipline and self-restraint. Even his friends were often alarmed at the fire of excitement and irritability ever ready to flame out in this fussy, insignificant-looking little man. 'The slightest word,' wrote Mutian, 'puts him in a frenzy.' His brilliant powers and fine humanistic culture filled him with such inordinate self-conceit that he came to regard himself as the initiator of a new era, and considered all his thoughts and actions as of epoch-making importance.

His genius, however, was essentially destructive.

Whatever stood in the way of the misty, undefined phantom of liberty which he had set up as his ideal, he

looked upon as tyranny and oppression and strove with all his might to overthrow. In his behaviour to his gainsayers all means and measures appeared to him legitimate—distortion of facts, lies, slander, and calumny. He was incapable of being inspired by a great or generous idea.

Contempt and ridicule of the Church, its teaching and its ordinances, Hutten had learnt from the Erfurt humanists, into whose circle he had been introduced by Crotus Rubianus. In a short time he became a zealous and impassioned follower of Mutian. He looked on the 'holy man' as the common leader of all those who were in league against the barbarians, and he kept up a correspondence with him through all his wanderings.

Hutten was so early saturated with a pagan, anti-Christian spirit that in an elegy to the gods, in which he bewails his misery to them and calls on them to avenge him, he mixes up with the heathen deities the 'Christ acquainted with suffering.'

Another noteworthy production of Hutten's is a consolatory poem addressed in the year 1515 to the father of his cousin, Hans von Hutten, equerry to Duke Ulrich of Württemberg, who had just been murdered by the Duke. The poem is essentially from a pagan point of view. Christians, he says, are, of course, bound to believe that the soul lives on after death, but even if it perished with the body, death would be no evil, as it puts an end to all suffering.

To the papacy Hutten had vowed the bitterest enmity during his first sojourn in Italy in 1513, when he composed his epigrams against that 'corrupter of

the world,' 'that pest of the human race' Pope Julius II.

On his return from Italy in 1514 he tried his luck at the court of the Archbishop of Mayence, Albrecht von Brandenburg, where his patron, Eitelwolf von Stein, a friend of Mutian's, held an influential post. As a revolutionist, who would fain have turned the world upside down, Hutten was scarcely a friend of princes, but, for the sake of the object they had in view, his party, he said, must make use of this species of humanity, and must praise and flatter them as Augustuses and Maecenases. They must throw out nets in all directions to catch their favour; they must cringe before them; they must wheedle themselves into their service as lawyers and theologians, and not be too proud to accept offices from them. In 1514 he addressed Albrecht in a poem as 'the ornament of his age,' 'a jewel of piety, protector of the peace and defender of learning.' In this poem he makes the Rhine call all the river gods together to celebrate the glory of Archbishop Albrecht, and he himself comes forward to greet his 'king and lord' as follows: 'Say, O Prince, what more will you achieve, you, who in the flower of your youth are already greater than all your predecessors?' The prince in question, then a youth of four-and-twenty, did not possess a single merit besides his high birth. But owing to the accident of birth, according to the scandalous usage of the times, after having already been elected Archbishop of Magdeburg and administrator of the bishopric of Halberstadt, he was promoted, in addition, to be Archbishop of Mayence and Primate of the German Church.

Erasmus prophesied from Hutten's panegyric that a

great epic poet was about to appear in Germany. Albrecht sent the poet a present of two hundred gold florins, and held out to him the prospect of a post at his court as soon as he should have completed the study of jurisprudence, which he had begun in Italy. For this purpose, with pecuniary assistance from Albrecht, Hutten travelled to Rome, and later on to Bologna, cherishing all the time hatred and enmity against the 'hypocritical, corrupt race of theologians and monks.' While in Rome he followed the great Reuchlin case with close attention, but thought it a matter of perfect indifference whether the Pope condemned Reuchlin or not. 'A single arrow shot by Erasmus at a scoundrel,' he wrote, 'could not be of less consequence to me than ten of that Florentine's anathemas, which for many and valid reasons are no longer much regarded by any one possessing any remnant of manliness.'

With Erasmus, Hutten had already made acquaintance at Mayence in the year 1514, and soon after that he began to praise the 'genuine theology' which this famous scholar had resuscitated. Although in his enthusiasm for heathen antiquity he had remained in complete ignorance of all Christian science, and especially of theological matters, he addressed Erasmus in a letter as the 'German Socrates,' who was no less solicitous about the education of the German people than Socrates had been about that of his own nation. He said that he should cleave to him as faithfully as Alcibiades had to Socrates.

'Arrows against scoundrels,' to use Hutten's expression, had again been shot by Erasmus in 1515 by the publication of a new edition of the 'Praise of Folly,' with commentaries in which the learning of the

schoolmen, the institution of monasticism, and the Papal Chair were viciously attacked. This edition was given out to be the work of one Gerardus Listrius, but in reality it proceeded—the chief part of it at any rate—from Erasmus himself.

The full gist and malice of the 'Praise of Folly' were now first thoroughly appreciated, and the growing fame of Erasmus, added to the bitterness of party feeling engendered by the Reuchlin controversy, procured for this second edition a furious sale. At the time of its appearance other satires of even grosser nature were in course of preparation in Mutian's circle, notably the 'Epistolae Virorum Obscurorum' ('Letters of Obscure Men'), written by Crotus Rubianus and Ulrich von Hutten. These letters, the first part of which appeared in 1515 and 1516, and the remainder in 1517, were expected to strike the death blow at obscurantism.

Nearly the whole of the 'Epistolae' relate to the Reuchlin controversy, but their real object was not so much to shower scorn on Reuchlin's antagonists as to attack the authority of the Church. As Justus Menius rightly pointed out later on, the Cologne obscurantists were not the real mark of the libellous shafts; the authority of the Church was already being undermined.

Erasmus had no share in the composition of these Letters; on the contrary he deprecated their tone; but Prince Carpi was justified in saying that it was the 'Praise of Folly' that had put their weapons into the hands of the authors of the 'Epistolae,' and that Erasmus was thus their spiritual father. In substance they were in fact little more than a reproduction of the 'Praise of Folly' carried to the extreme of gross-

ness and personality. The most objectionable parts of them, as in the earlier satire, are those which make fun of the Holy Ghost. Erasmus had allowed himself free and irreverent use of Scripture for purposes of caricature: in the 'Letters of Obscure Men' monks who were held up to derision were made to quote passages from the Bible in extenuation of obscene matters. Erasmus, a man devoid of all moral seriousness, set himself up as an eloquent preacher of morality, and turned the whole system of monasticism into ridicule; but he abstained from mentioning individuals. His successors, Crotus and Hutten, bespattered named individuals with the mud in which they themselves wallowed, and did not even spare the immaculate Arnold von Tungern, whom they accused of writing most shameful things and of carrying on an adulterous connection with the wife of Pfefferkorn.

The similes in the 'Epistolae' are of the most offensive description. Our Lord Jesus Christ is compared to Cadmus; as Cadmus went forth in search of his sister, so Christ seeks after *his* sister the human soul; because Christ had two nativities, one before all time and another in his human form, he is compared to the twice-born Bacchus; Semele, who brought up Bacchus, signifies the Virgin Mary. The Pope is spoken of with the utmost derision, confession and the worship of relics are ridiculed; the holy vestment at Treves is called a shabby old coat, and the three holy kings of Cologne are said to have been probably three Westphalian peasants.

The 'genuine theology of Erasmus,' which had become a stock phrase, plays its part in these satires, and is held out as a means for reforming the Church and

dissipating the errors which have crept in. By such men as Erasmus, we are informed, God intends to visit with His judgment those stiff-necked divines who persist in the foul, obscure, senseless theology which was invented several hundred years ago. From want of linguistic knowledge the divines were not in a position to understand the Scriptures. Mutian also is here included among the men chosen out to punish those people 'who are playing their last card.'

Hoogstraten in his apology expressed himself as follows concerning the writers of this libellous book: 'We do not intend to write in the style of those calumniators whose mouths are full of hatred and bitterness, but empty of wisdom and learning, and who delight in abusive language such as one scarcely hears from the lowest roughs. God Himself, to whom be eternal praise, will judge between them and us.'

'He who is throned above the clouds,' says the same writer in an apostrophe to Reuchlin, 'knows our hearts, and is a witness that we are innocent victims of all this slander and abuse; He knows that we pray fervently to Him without ceasing, and that we have not followed the example of those professors of false doctrines who besmirch godly men with damaging obloquy. None who are lovers of truth will ever be able to say that the theologians of Cologne behaved craftily or treacherously towards you, but rather that they have only struggled for the defence of Christian truth. Nothing that we have done has been prompted by hatred, or done for the satisfaction of our own vanity; we have only acted in righteous conformity to papal injunctions, which require of us as a duty to withstand all error.'

Pfefferkorn also took up the cudgels against the 'Epistolae' and issued a pamphlet called the 'Defence,' written both in German and Latin, and a little volume called 'Streitbüchlein,' in which publications he inveighed against the irreverent handling of sacred things in the 'Epistolae,' and also against the calumnious charges aimed at him personally.

These pamphlets appeared in 1516 and 1517. Pfefferkorn dedicated them to Albrecht, Archbishop of Mayence, whom he implored to take measures against the Jews' books, to close the Reuchlin case, which had now been dragging on for three years, and to vindicate him (Pfefferkorn) against the impugnment of his honour before both a secular and an ecclesiastical tribunal. Albrecht, however, threw aside the pamphlets without reading them and sent the bearer away without any answer.

This behaviour of the Archbishop was not prompted by any idea that Pfefferkorn had gone too far in his demands against the Jews; for while he (Pfefferkorn) only proposed that their books should be taken from them, and that they should be compelled to earn their living by honest labour, and to attend sermons at stated times, Albrecht was himself at the very time working to bring about their perpetual banishment from Germany, organising a league for the purpose and endeavouring to gain more more princes and towns to the cause. But he had been caught in the nets of the humanists with whom he had surrounded himself, and had taken a decided line against the Cologne Faculty, whom he would not even suffer to bring their cause before a court of justice.

'May the earth open and swallow up that baptised Hebrew, and all the poisonous crew of hypocritical

theologians and monks who are backing him up!' So Albrecht's physician in ordinary, Henry Stromer, had written to Reuchlin in August 1516.

It was Archbishop Albrecht's ambition to make his electoral court a centre of learning and art, and to imitate the Medicis on German soil. 'Where in the whole of Germany,' writes Hutten, 'is there a scholar whom Albrecht does not know, or what man of learning and culture has ever addressed himself to the Archbishop whom he has not loaded with his favour and generosity?' Artists, like Albert Dürer and Matthäus Grünewald, miniature-painters, like Beham and Glockendon, received from him frequent commissions; sculptors and gold artificers were paid princely sums by him to enrich with splendid works of art the cathedral of Mayence and its treasuries. The Archbishop was passionately fond of music, and he procured musicians from far and near, even from Italy, to heighten the charms of those sumptuous banquets which were often graced by the presence of ladies. Richly embroidered carpets and sparkling mirrors adorned his halls and apartments; costly dishes and *recherché* wines covered his tables. As Prince Elector he revelled in outward pomp and magnificence; he had a body-guard of a hundred and fifty armed riders; crowds of court-servants in splendid liveries accompanied him when he rode in and out; pages of noble birth were trained at his court in all elegant, knightly demeanour. The brilliancy of his retinue elegant the whole atmosphere of his *entourage* were a theme for countless panegyrists, but were scarcely in accordance with the position and calling of archbishop and Primate of the German Church. Albrecht was by no means a man of vital, inward piety, or of

serious moral character. He had never even mastered the groundwork of theology, and he did not concern himself at all about the practical training of the clergy. While regarding the scholastic learning that had hitherto been in vogue as a remnant of barbarism he held forth in rapturous terms about the divine genius of Erasmus, which was about to restore to its pristine glory the degenerate theology of the present day. He promised Erasmus his zealous support, and Erasmus in return extolled Albrecht, in a letter to Reuchlin, as 'the sole ornament of Germany in our age,' lamenting grievously, however, that he should have lowered himself by becoming a 'monk of the Romish Pope' and accepting a cardinal's hat.

The 'poets' who resided at the Archbishop's court, freethinkers all of them, and scoffers at religion, held their meetings, according to the 'Epistolae Virorum Obscurorum,' in the Crown Hostel. They carried swords and rapiers at their side; they gambled for indulgence tickets, carried on blasphemous talk, and made game of any unlucky monks or 'doctors' whose evil stars led them to the same resort. Ulrich von Hutten, one of the frequenters of this inn, makes a monk relate in the 'Epistolae' that he (Hutten) had once said, that if the Dominicans treated him as they had treated Reuchlin he would proclaim a feud against them, and cut off the noses and ears of any of them who fell into his hands.

With Hutten talk of this sort was not mere bravado. Erasmus tells later on, as a fact generally known by the people, that Hutten had actually cut off the ears of two preaching monks who had fallen into his hands, and had committed many similar acts of brutality. Feud and

rapine were thoroughly in accordance with his wild, undisciplined nature. Once in 1509 he requested his cousin Ludwig von Hutten to knock down a certain tradesman, who was an enemy of his, on the way to the Frankfort fair: he was not to kill him, as that would not be advisable, but to shut him up in the tower, and he himself would finish off the punishment.

Before Hutten was actually received into the service of Archbishop Albrecht on his return from Italy in the autumn of 1817 he brought out a new edition of Laurentius Valla's book on the fictitious Donation of Constantine to Pope Sylvester and his successors, and he accompanied it with a preface to Pope Leo X., which exceeded all that had ever been written against papacy in virulent invective, scorn, and derision. He described all the former popes as robbers, plunderers, tyrants, and extortioners, who had put a money price on the pardon of sins, and had turned the punishments of the next world into a source of revenue for themselves. 'None but the great Leo X.,' said the hypocrite, 'had been a good pope'—that same Leo of whom Hutten had spoken a short time before as a frivolous, avaricious Florentine. 'Leo,' he now declared, 'had restored peace and justice, truth and freedom, and was prepared to give up his secular dominion; he would of his own accord graciously renounce what must have been taken from him by force if he had been a bad pope.'

It had, indeed, long been the maxim of Hutten that in the sacred cause of freedom force would soon become imperative, and he had shown plainly enough in his 'Triumph of Reuchlin' what might be expected from his 'party,' supposing the latter to have acquired sufficient strength for the execution of its plans. In

this poem, in which he loads Reuchlin's enemies with chains and showers insults on them, he calls on the hangman to mangle and mutilate Pfefferkorn, and drag him along by the feet. He gloats gruesomely over the tortures which the hangman is to perpetrate on Pfefferkorn:

Hurl him down with his hated face to the earth;
Upwards straighten his knees, that he may not behold the heavens,
That his staring glance may not perturb you.
With his slandering mouth let him gnaw the earth,
With his lips let him feed on the dust.
Why do you tarry, you hangman? make haste, open wide his mouth;
Tear out his tongue, tear it out, that author of evil unspeakable.
Hack off his ears and his nose, and fix right fast in his feet
The iron; haul him round by his knees,
That his face and his heart may sweep the earth.
Knock out his teeth and make his lips innocuous.
Have you fastened his hands behind him and gagged him tight?
Then crop off his finger-tips as well, O hangman.

To many people it seemed incomprehensible that an archbishop and a Primate of the German Church should have taken such a man as Hutten into his service. 'The ecclesiastical and the secular princes, the first even more than the last,' wrote Prince Carpi ten years later with reference to Hutten's literary productions, 'are now reaping fruits which to a great extent they have sown themselves, or whose growth, at any rate, they have fostered. It is essentially with the "poets" that all the risings against Church and Commonwealth, all the violations of law and order which we see around us have had their origin. But who are they who encouraged these same "poets" and made use of their services? Church dignitaries of the highest rank have not infrequently harboured at their voluptuous courts flatterers and sycophants, who in a semi-pagan spirit railed at everything that was sacred

to the nation, and aimed at the subversion of all existing institutions.' This impious poesy-mongering and literary parasitism had resulted in immeasurable evil, and the worldliness and irreligiousness of ecclesiastical princes were largely to blame for the contempt in which the clerical status had come to be held and for the anarchy with which church and state were threatened.

But this unholy poesy-mongering, Prince Carpi might have added, had met with encouragement at the Romish Court much earlier even than in Germany, and the Renaissance had already unfolded its brilliant and seductive blossoms in Rome long before it had become recognised in Germany. A very small proportion of the 120 'poets' who lived at Rome under Leo X., and besieged the theatres, the palaces, and even the churches, can be credited with any Christian belief or sentiment.

The courts of very many among the German ecclesiastical princes—notably that of the Archbishop of Mayence—were in crying contradiction to the vocation of Church dignitaries, but the Court of Leo X., with its extravagant expenditure in card-playing, theatres, and all manner of worldly entertainments, was still more flagrantly opposed to the position of chief overseer of the Church. The iniquity of Rome far exceeded that of the ecclesiastical princes of Germany; indeed, the worldliness and profligacy of the latter would scarcely have reached the point it did, or at any rate would not have been tolerated so long, had it not been for the example set by the Pontifical Court.

In Italy, moreover, a movement of emancipation from the ancient traditions of Christian scholarship and art, and a spirit of irreverence for the great monuments

of the Christian past, had been in progress long before the taint of heathenism had begun to infect learning and science in Germany.

One of the most striking proofs of this was the order issued by Pope Julius II. for the demolition of the ancient Basilica of St. Peter's—the shrine for centuries of universal Christendom—in order to erect on its ruins a facsimile of the Pantheon. The scheme met with much disapproval among the population of Rome,[1] and cries of lamentation were loud in Germany over the impending destruction of this venerable sanctuary. The opinion was uttered that such a project could have been inspired by no good evangelical spirit, but by the evil genius of profane art, and that it would not bring a blessing, but rather a curse, on the country. Julius II. had proclaimed a sale of indulgences for laying the foundations of this new St. Peter's Church. Leo X. renewed the sale in 1514, in order to raise money for the completion of the building, and employed the Minorites to proclaim the Bulls relating to the sale.

The chief papal commissioner for North Germany was the Archbishop Albert of Mayence, and it occurred to him that he might profit by this favourable opportunity for paying off the debt which he had incurred with the Fuggers of Augsburg for remittance of the Pallium money to Rome. These Pallium fees amounted at that time in the archbishopric of Mayence to a sum of not less twenty thousand Rhenish florins, which had to be contributed by the different provinces of the diocese. Within the space of one decade this enormous sum had been paid up twice—after the death

[1] See Ranke's *History of the Popes*, i. 69–70; v. Neumont, iii. 377; Pastor's *History of the Popes*, iii. 707.

of Archbishop Berthold von Henneberg in 1504 and of Jacob von Liebenstein in 1508. Hence the cathedral chapter, on a fresh vacancy of the Papal Chair in 1514, after the death of Uriel von Gemmingen, had gladly accepted Albert's proposal, if he were chosen Archbishop, to bear the costs of the Pallium himself. Albert had borrowed the money from the Fuggers, and the latter were now referred to the Pope's dealers for repayment of this debt out of the proceeds of the sale of indulgences, half of which was to be handed over to them and the other half to the building fund of St. Peter's.

This disgraceful bargain had been concluded in the summer of 1514, but was not carried into effect till 1517. At the beginning of this year the preaching of indulgences was started, and almost simultaneously the Church was violently convulsed by the appearance on the scene of the Augustinian monk Martin Luther.

Luther[1] *and Hutten*

Martin Luther was born at Eisenach on November 10, 1483. His youth, passed at Mansfeld, was a period of hardship and suppression, not so much on account of the poverty of his parents as from the extreme severity with which he was treated both at home and at school. He himself relates that his mother once whipped him till he bled, all about a miserable nut, and that another time his father punished him so cruelly that he was filled with hatred against him, and was very nearly running away from home. At school he once

[1] (For footnotes about Luther, which are very lengthy and numerous, and which refer to German books not translated into English, or to Latin writers, see vol. ii. pp. 70–141 of German original.—TRANSLATOR.)

got fifteen thrashings in one morning; and with all this beating and misery, he says, he learnt nothing at all. This system of education developed a timid, nervous disposition, and left no room for joyous obedience. It was well calculated to daunt and crush the passionate spirit of the boy, but not to curb and direct it. In his fourteenth year Luther was sent to the school of the *Nullbrüder* at Magdeburg, and in the following year to the Latin school at Eisenach. So great was his poverty that he was obliged to sing in the streets to earn a crust of bread. His religious feelings were strongly influenced at this period by the solemn church services of the place and the religious plays performed there, and especially by the German hymns, in which the whole congregation used to join during the service.

When he was about sixteen years old a great change took place in his life at Eisenach, owing to the kindness of Frau Cotta, a rich lady of noble birth, who took him to live with her own family. She had taken a great fancy to him, says Luther's eulogist Mathesius, on account of his beautiful voice and his devout behaviour in church. In 1501 Luther went to the Monastery of Erfurt to study philosophy and law. In 1502 he took the degree of Bachelor of Philosophy, and three years later that of Doctor, after which he was occupied for a short time in lecturing on the physics and ethics of Aristotle.

At Erfurt he pursued zealously the study of the classics; he read most of the works of the Latin authors, Cicero, Livius, Virgil, and Plautus, attended the humanistic lectures of Hieronymus Emser, and distinguished himself so greatly, says his biographer, that the whole university wondered at his intellectual powers.

Among the younger humanists whose circle he joined, Crotus Rubianus and Johannes Lange were his special friends, but he himself passed among his associates as a musician and a learned philosopher rather than as a poet. He joined heartily in all their social pleasures, and delighted them with his singing and music. But he would often pass suddenly from mirth and cheerfulness to a gloomy, despondent state of mind, in which he was tormented by searchings of conscience. In the year 1505 he sustained a great shock in the sudden death of a friend, who was stabbed in a duel, and in the same year he was caught in a terrific thunderstorm, during which his life was in danger. 'As I hurried along with the anguish and fear of death upon me,' he wrote later on, 'I vowed a vow that was wrung from me by terror.' Soon after he gathered his friends together at a supper, which was enlivened by lute-playing and singing, and then informed them of the resolve he had made to renounce the world and become an Augustinian monk. 'To-day you see me,' he said, 'but afterwards no more.' All the entreaties of his friends were useless. They accompanied him, weeping, to the doors of the monastery.

It was characteristic of Luther that the only books which he took with him into his retreat were the pagan poets Virgil and Plautus. What the Dominican monk Peter Schwarz said against exclusive devotion to the classics and the study of law was entirely applicable to Luther up to within the last years before the great crisis of his life. 'How many men now-a-days study poetry and poetising, and how few study the Holy Scriptures; how many master the subtleties of law, and how few have any knowledge of the Gospel!' Reuchlin,

in like manner, complained that the Scriptures were neglected at the present day for the arts of rhetoric and poetry. While in all the Latin schools which adhered to the traditional Church methods the study of the Bible was carried on assiduously it appears that in the schools which Luther attended, if we may believe his own testimony, the ancient classics alone were taught. 'When I was twenty years old I had not yet seen a Bible; I thought there were no other gospels and epistles besides those in the homilies.' These words are the more astonishing, seeing that when he was twenty years of age he had already been for two years a student at the Erfurt University, where there could have been no lack of opportunity for becoming acquainted with the Bible, which had been a recognised subject of study there ever since the middle of the fifteenth century. Of the still extant manuscript theological works in one of the town libraries of Erfurt exegetical writings make up about one-half; and in 1480 a scholarship was founded at the University of Erfurt for an eight years' course of study of the Holy Scriptures, 'with some attention also to canon law.'

'I entered the monastery,' writes Luther, 'and renounced the world, despairing of myself all the while.' In spite of the decided objections of his father, who mistrusted Martin's vocation for the monastic life, and who wished to see his extraordinarily gifted son loaded with worldly distinction and married to a wealthy wife, Luther took the vow of the Eremites of St. Augustine, to live in poverty and chastity after the rule of St. Augustine until death. 'In opposition to the fifth commandment,' his father said to him on his consecration as priest, 'you have forsaken your dear

mother and myself in our old age, when we might have expected some help and comfort from you, seeing how much your studies have cost us.'

It was not in response to a real call that Luther had entered the monastery, but in obedience to a sudden, impetuous resolve, formed after an attack of morbid discontent with his inner spiritual condition; and the means by which, after having become a monk, he endeavoured to obtain the peace he lacked only aggravated his condition. He fell a victim to a morbid hyper-scrupulousness, which was, no doubt, fostered in great measure by the isolation of the monastic life. Simple, unquestioning obedience to the rules of his Order became distasteful to him. It was his duty to say his 'Horæ' daily, but, carried away by his passion for study, he often let weeks go by without taking his breviary in his hand; then he would try to make up all at once for past omissions, would shut himself up in his cell, touch neither food nor drink for several weeks, go without sleep, and torture himself to such an extent that he was once nearly losing his senses. The prescribed rules of ascetic practice did not satisfy him. I imposed on myself additional penances,' he writes; 'I devised a special plan of discipline for myself. The seniors in my Rule objected strongly to this irregularity, and they were right. I was a criminal self-torturer and self-destroyer, for I imposed on myself fastings, prayers, and vigils beyond my powers of endurance; I wore myself out with self-mortifications, which is nothing less than self-murder.' The old monastic proverb was amply verified in Luther: 'In a monk everything but obedience is despicable.' Like all hyper-sensitive souls he saw in himself nothing but

sin, in God nothing but wrath and vengeance. With this agony of remorse there mingled no feeling of love to God, no childlike hope in His mercy through Christ. The thought of the Deity awoke no emotion in him but that of unmitigated fear, and he was for ever seeking to appease the Divine wrath by his own righteousness, by the power of works which should bring him into a condition of sinlessness. 'I was a most outrageous believer in self-justification, a right presumptuous seeker of salvation through works, not trusting in God's righteousness, but in my own.'

In this way he came gradually to such a condition of hopeless despondency and despair that, as he says, he actually hated God and raved against Him, and hated his own existence, often wishing that he had never been born. 'From misplaced reliance on my own righteousness,' he says, 'my heart became full of distrust, doubt, fear, hatred, and blasphemy of God. I was such an enemy of Christ that whenever I saw an image or a picture of Him hanging on His cross I loathed the sight and I shut my eyes, and felt that I would rather have seen the devil. My spirit was completely broken, and I was always in a state of melancholy, for do what I would my 'righteousness' and my 'good works' brought me no help or consolation.' Strange to say, Luther, in later years, attributed this melancholy spiritual condition to the influence of the Church's teaching concerning good works, while as a fact he was in complete opposition to this, as to all other doctrines of the Church.

Any manual of religious instruction and devotion might have taught him that the Church repudiated all Pharisaic doctrines of self-justification, and considered

Christ and His merits as the sole foundation of Christian righteousness, and the grace of Christ as the source of all life and action that was pleasing in the sight of God; and, above all, in the eyes of the Church ascetic practices were merely means to an end, wholesome discipline for weakening and overcoming sinful inclinations with the help of grace, but in no way meritorious actions on which man could build hopes of acceptance with God. 'Man must fix his faith, hope, and love on God and not on anything created.' So runs the catechism of Dietrich Roehde, published in 1470. 'He must trust in nothing but the merits of Christ.' In the 'Seelenwurzgärtlein,' one of the most complete and widely used prayer-books of the time, there stands the following injunction: 'You must place all your hope and trust on nothing but the merits and death of Jesus Christ.' 'Man must die trusting in the mercy of God and not in his own good works,' says Ulrich Krafft in his 'Spiritual Conflict' of the year 1503. Amongst all the books recognised and used by the Church, whether learned works or religious tracts for the people, there is not a single one in which the doctrine of justification through Christ is not clearly set forth.

Whilst this condition of spiritual despair and self-torture continued, Luther found no comfort or relief in receiving the Sacrament. Twice at Erfurt and once in Rome he sought alleviation of his misery by making plenary confession, but it was all in vain. His whole nervous system was so strained and overwrought that when he was at Rome, as he wrote in later years, he almost wished that his parents were dead, so that he might have the joy of releasing them from purgatory by his good works and his Masses. He says that he felt

at that time that he might even have become a hideous murderer for the sake of religion, had the opportunity been at hand. 'I should have been ready to kill any one and every one for daring to refuse obedience to one syllable from the Pope.'

Such a state of religious exaltation could not but be followed by a violent reaction. Racked thus in the innermost depths of his being, and tortured to death by his conscience, Luther ended by passing over to the other extreme. If he had hitherto put overmuch confidence in his own good deeds, he now cast away all reliance whatever on human strength and righteousness in the work of salvation. He began to believe that man, by reason of inherited sin, had become altogether depraved and had no free-will; that all human action whatever, even that which was directed towards good, was an emanation from man's corrupt nature and therefore, in the sight of God, nothing more or less than deadly sin; that it was by faith alone that man could be saved. 'When we believe in Christ we make His merits our own possession;' it was thus that he now taught. 'We put on the garment of His righteousness, which covers all our guilt and our condition of perpetual sinfulness, and furthermore makes up in superfluity for all human shortcomings; hence, when once we believe, we need no longer be tormented in our consciences.' 'Be a sinner if you will,' he writes to a friend, 'and sin right lustily, but believe still more lustily, and rejoice in Christ, who is the vanquisher of sin.' 'From the Lamb that takes away the sin of the world, sin will not separate men, even though they should commit fornication a thousand times a day and murders as frequently.'

This new doctrine of justification by faith alone Luther considered the central point of Christianity. It summed up for him the whole of Scripture; it was the truth which had long lain hidden on a shelf; he called it, in short, the 'New Gospel,' the only medicine for the salvation of Christendom. His teachings, he declared, contained Gospel truth as pure and unadulterated almost as that of the Apostles; what, indeed, did the word 'gospel' mean but a new, a good, a joyful message, or good news, the announcement of something that people rejoice to hear? This can never be laws or commandments, for the breaking of which we shall be punished with damnation; for no one would rejoice at such an announcement.

This new doctrine began shaping itself gradually in Luther's mind in the year 1508, after his appointment to the professorship of philosophy at the Wittenberg university, founded six years before. This post had been conferred on him by the Elector Frederic of Saxony at the instigation of Luther's intimate friend Johann von Staupitz. Luther's departure from Erfurt, according to contemporary records of the year 1508, was not a matter of regret to the 'Brothers' there, for Luther 'was always in the right' in all disputations, and he dearly loved disputing.

At Wittenberg Luther devoted himself chiefly to Biblical and theological studies; he was invested with the dignity of Doctor of Divinity in 1512, and lectured to admiring audiences on the Pauline letters—the letters to the Romans especially—the Psalms, and St. Augustine. He also gained great fame as preacher in the Cathedral Church. 'This Brother has deep-set eyes,' said Martin Pollich, the first rector of the

Wittenberg University, of Luther; 'he must have wonderful thoughts and ideas.'

Already several years before the outbreak of the indulgence controversy Luther had put himself outside the teaching of the Church by his opinions on grace and justification and the absence of free-will; and in the year 1515, according to the testimony of his eulogist Mathesius, he was denounced as a heretic. 'Our righteousness,' he said in a sermon preached at Christmas 1515, 'is only sin; each one of us, therefore, must accept the grace offered by Christ.' 'Learn, dear brother,' he wrote on April 7, 1516, to the Augustinian George Spenlein at Memmingen, 'learn to despair of thyself and say: "Thou, Lord Jesus, art my righteousness; I am Thy sin. Thou hast taken what is mine and given me what is Thine." Only through Christ, and through utter abnegation of thyself and thine own works, shalt thou find peace.' He was already so firmly convinced of the truth of this teaching that he added an anathema to it: 'Cursed be whoever does not believe this.' His tenets are expressed in the most outspoken terms in the report of a disputation held at the university in September 1516, on which occasion he had asked to be elected president of the debate—an honour which ought by right to have been conferred on another member. In this discussion the following thesis, among others, was defended: 'Man commits sin whenever he acts according to his own impulses, for of himself he can neither think nor will rightly. Of the twenty-nine theses which he wrote out for a *Doctoranden* the fourth runs thus: 'The truth is that man, after having become a corrupt tree, can will and do nothing but what is bad;' and the 5th: 'It is false to

say that the will of man is free and can decide one way or another: our wills are not free, but in captivity.'

It was during the Lent of 1517 that he began preaching his new tenets openly among the people. In these sermons he inveighed fiercely against those vain babblers who had filled Christendom with their chatter, and had misled the poor credulous folk with their pulpit utterances, telling them that they ought to have or to cultivate good wills, good intentions, good ways of thinking. Where no will whatever existed, Luther taught them, God's will was the best of all.

Already in July 1517, three months before the beginning of the indulgence controversy, Duke George of Saxony expressed his fears of the effect of such teaching on the people. When Luther proclaimed, in a sermon preached at Dresden on July 25 by desire of the Duke, that the mere acceptance of the merits of Christ insured salvation, and that nobody who possessed this faith need doubt of his salvation, the Duke said more than once at table, in serious earnest, 'he would give a great deal not to have heard this sermon, which would only make the people restive and mutinous.'

Luther's doctrines, for which he thought he found support in St. Augustine, had spread through the whole University of Wittenberg, so he writes, as early as the year 1516.

It was after October 31, 1517, that they began to be disseminated throughout Germany.

It was on this day that Luther, incensed by the indulgence preacher Johann Tetzel, affixed to the church door at Wittenberg twenty-nine theses attacking the virtue of indulgences.

Tetzel, a Dominican monk and a favourite popular

preacher, had been appointed by Albert, Archbishop of Mayence, sub-commissioner in Upper Germany, to carry on the sale of indulgences established by Leo X. for the building of St. Peter's Church. His sermons attracted everywhere immense crowds of people.

The erroneous views still current concerning these sermons on the sale of indulgences spring chiefly from the reason that things of very different natures have not been carefully enough distinguished. Whoever wished to procure an indulgence for him or herself was required first to make confession in true penitence, to attend church devoutly, and to contribute to the building of St. Peter's Church in proportion to his or her means. The indulgence preachers were expressly enjoined 'to dismiss no applicant without grace, as in this transaction the welfare of Christian believers was no less considered than the building of the church. Those who had no money to contribute were to give their prayers and faith, for the kingdom of heaven was not open to the rich more than to the poor.'

With regard to the granting of indulgences to the living, Tetzel's teaching was throughout irreproachable, and the statement that he sold pardon for sin for the sake of gain without requiring penitence has no warrant in fact. His proceedings with regard to indulgences for the dead are more open to criticism. It has often been alleged, though from all appearances unjustly, that if Tetzel's preaching on this point was not exactly open to reproach it corresponded closely, at any rate, to the sense of the lines—

> As soon as the gold in the casket rings
> The rescued soul to heaven springs.

In order to feel empowered to proclaim this teaching

the preacher of indulgences had only to believe that an indulgence for a dead person could certainly be obtained by payment of the prescribed sum, and that the indulgence procured would, without doubt, be applied to the particular soul it was bought for. Now both in the papal bulls of that period and in the Mayence 'Instructions' drawn up for the guidance of the preachers the only condition insisted on in applicants for indulgences for the dead is a gift of money towards the building of St. Peter's Church; it is expressly stated that for obtaining this kind of indulgence no repentance or confession is necessary. Was there any certainty, however, that the indulgences obtained would be applied to the souls for which they were bought? In the Mayence 'Instructions' this question is answered decidedly in the affirmative. And on this point the compiler of the 'Instructions' was able to support his statement by a scholastic interpretation recognised by eminent theologians. It was merely a scholastic opinion, however, not Church dogma, that indulgences for the dead were quite certain to benefit the particular souls they had been procured for. Cardinal Cajetanus proves that in the Rome of Leo X. such a statement certainly did not hold good. No credence, he said, must be given to theologians and preachers who made such unfounded assertions. 'The preachers,' said Cajetanus emphatically, 'come forward in the name of the Church in so far as they proclaim the teaching of Christ and of the Church; but if they teach out of their own heads, and for their own profit, things about which they have no knowledge, they cannot pass as representatives of the Church, and one cannot wonder if in such cases they fall into error.' It would

have been better for the Catholic cause if, in so delicate a matter, the German indulgence preachers had observed the same reticence as Cajetanus. As, however, the indulgence commissioners themselves inserted in an official document a very dubious scholastic opinion as if it were positive truth, what was to be expected from the ordinary indulgence preacher? Grievous abuses there certainly were in the proceedings and the behaviour of the preachers, and the manner of offering the indulgence bills and touting for customers caused all sorts of scandal; Tetzel especially cannot be altogether acquitted of blame. It was not, however, the abuses of the sale which impelled Luther to the course he took, but the doctrine of indulgences itself—above all the Church teaching of good works, which was contrary to his views concerning justification and free-will. The satisfaction which Christ requires, he says, is in the heart, so that you must not go off to Rome, or to Jerusalem, or to St. Jacob, or hither and thither in search of absolution. Christ's letter of indulgence runs thus: 'If you forgive your debtors my Father will also forgive you; but if you do not forgive them, neither will my Father forgive you your debts.'

Thus the Church also had always taught; she insisted continually on the necessity of a real conversion of the heart and a worthy reception of the Eucharist for each one who wished to obtain absolution—that is to say, remission of the temporal penalties of sin.

Luther, however, preached that 'this so-called indulgence brief of Christ's, sealed with His wounds and ratified by His death, was almost entirely obliterated and washed out by the deluge of Romish indulgences.' Christ did not say, '"You must observe so

many fasts for your sins, say so many prayers, give so much in alms; you must do this, that, or the other:" He only required us to renounce all our sins and forgive those who had trespassed against us. Such indulgence bills as this would not erect a new Church of St. Peter, which, no doubt, was what the Devil wanted, but they would build up the Church of Christ, which the Devil does not want at all.' Such indulgences, moreover, could not lose their significance through his (Luther's) adding that he did not want to reject Romish indulgences altogether. Pointing out the deeper ground of his objections, he wrote later on to Tetzel: 'You need not trouble and distress yourself, for the matter did not begin with you: this child had, indeed, quite a different father.' 'The Church was full of spiritual abuses,' he said once in a memorandum drawn up for the Elector of Saxony; 'the notables of the Empire had complained of them, and the Pope had promised redress; as, however, the abuses had not been suppressed by those whose business it was to get rid of them, the people were beginning to do away with them themselves all over Germany, and the clergy were despised and regarded as ignorant, unworthy, yea, pernicious people. . . .' This sweeping away of abuses was already to a great extent in full swing before Luther's teaching began; for the whole world had grown sick and weary of them. Luther, however, gave all the credit to his own teaching, through which he said religion would be saved.

In opposition to Luther's theses Tetzel, on January 20, 1518, posted up a hundred and six antitheses[1] at

[1] The common supposition that Tetzel burnt Luther's theses publicly is incorrect. See Gröne, pp. 122–126. Tetzel's antitheses were burnt by the

the University of Frankfort on the Oder, where he had taken his degree of doctor of theology. In these the Church teaching on indulgences was briefly and clearly set forth. Indulgences do not blot out sins, but only remit the temporal punishment due to sin, and that only when the sins have been confessed and truly repented of. Indulgences do not stultify the merits of Christ, but substitute for expiatory penalties the expiatory sufferings of Christ. 'In the holy council of Costnitz,' writes Tetzel, 'it was decided anew that any one wishing to obtain an indulgence must first have confessed at the Sacrament of Penitence, according to the ordinance of the Holy Church, or must intend so to do.' All papal indulgence bulls and letters lay down also the same condition. 'Only those persons are deserving of indulgences who are truly penitent, and filled with love for God, which love does not allow them to remain lazy and indolent, but stimulates them to serve God and do great works for His glory.' It is moreover a known fact that it is Christian, God-fearing, pious people, and not lewd, idle ones, who are eager to obtain indulgences. For all indulgences are given first and foremost for the sake of God's glory. Consequently whoever gives alms to procure an indulgence bill, gives to the honour of God, seeing that no one can obtain indulgence who has not attained to true penitence and love of God, and whoever does good works out of love for God lives to the glory of God. 'It is not for any works of righteousness we accomplish ourselves that God gives us salvation, but through His holy mercy.' Such was the teaching which, according to Tetzel, the

Wittenberg students in the market-place. See Luther's Letters of March 21 and May 9, 1518, edited by De Wette.

preachers of indulgences were enjoined to impress on the hearts of their hearers.

Among the papal bulls and letters of indulgence, in which the nature of indulgences was clearly stated, we may specially notice a decree issued by Leo X. in 1518. The Pope, it said, as successor of St. Peter, the holder of the keys, and as Vicar of Christ, had authority, through the power handed over to him with the keys of the Church, to remit both the sins of Christian believers and the penalties incurred by those sins. The sins themselves were remitted by the priests in the sacrament of penitence, but the temporal punishment of the sins by the absolution of the Church.

As the agitation proceeded Tetzel plainly recognised that it was no mere scholastic dispute that Luther had started, but a serious conflict, involving fundamental principles of Christian doctrine and Church authority. Already in 1518, in his refutation of Luther's 'Articles on Absolution and Grace,' he had said: 'These articles inculcate contempt of the Pope and of the Church; henceforth people will no longer believe in the teaching of the Church, and will interpret Holy Scripture just as it pleases them; whereby great spiritual danger will arise among the Christian populace; for each one will believe only what suits him or her.'

The Emperor Maximilian also thoroughly grasped the whole scope of the contention. Luther's innovations, he said in a letter to the Pope on August 5, 1518, 'if not strenuously opposed, would imperil the unity of the faith, and private opinion would take the place of traditional dogma.'

Luther claimed from the outset that his cause was the cause of God; he expected his assertions to be

accepted as fixed and unalterable truth. When he sent his first indulgence theses to his friend Johannes Lange, on November 11, 1517, he wrote as follows: 'They reproach me with rashness, arrogance, and a passion for anathematising, but without some arrogance and combativeness—or at any rate the semblance of them—nothing new can be accomplished.' In support of this statement he alleged the example of Christ and all the holy martyrs. Why had they been put to death, why had these teachers been the marks of hatred and envy, but because they had been regarded as arrogant contemners of time-honoured wisdom, or because, without the concurrence of those who were versed in old-established beliefs, they had introduced new ideas and opinions? He, Luther, taught the purest theology, which no doubt was a 'stumbling-block to the Jews and to the Greeks foolishness.' All that he preached, and that his adversaries thus contested, he had received straight from the Almighty.

Luther's reiterated declaration, during the earlier years of this great controversy, that he would remain subject to the Pope and the Church, while all the time he was maintaining his new doctrine of justification by faith only and of the non-freedom of the human will, could only be taken to mean that he would remain true to the Church if the Church came round to his views. Under these circumstances there could be no hope that any amount of disputation would lead to a satisfactory result, neither could any accommodation be arrived at either through the negotiations held with Luther by Cardinal Cajetanus at Augsburg in 1518 by order of the Pope, or by the derogatory attempts at reconciliation of Carl von Miltitz. In the sure convic-

tion that he would be excommunicated, Luther had already in July 1518 preached a sermon on the power of the papal ban, in which he propounded a new theory entirely opposed to Church teaching—namely, that the true fellowship of the Church was not a visible but an invisible reality, from which one could not be excluded by a ban, but only by sin.

Luther's conviction that he was called by God to proclaim anew the fundamental truths of Christianity, which had been falsified and distorted since the days of the Apostles, led him to declare that he would have his teaching amended by no one, not even by angels. 'Whoever rejects my doctrine,' he said, 'cannot be saved.' It also led him to the opinion, long held by the Hussites and other heretical teachers of the fifteenth century, that the Pope was Antichrist, and that the Church was languishing in Babylonish captivity. And these two fixed ideas that he was a divinely inspired teacher and that the Pope was Antichrist dominated his whole life and work.

On December 11, 1518, Luther sent to a friend the report of his negotiations with Cardinal Cajetanus at Augsburg with the following remark: 'My pen is already busy with far more important matters, but I send you my "trifles," in order that you may judge whether I am right in supposing that the veritable Antichrist, of whom St. Paul speaks, is now ruling at the Court of Rome. That the latter is even worse than the Turks I think I shall have no difficulty in proving.' 'The Court of Rome,' he wrote to Spalatin on December 21, 1518, 'is fighting Christ and His Church with an army of monsters that surpasses all the horrors of the Turks.' And again on March 13, 1516: 'I don't mind telling

you, between ourselves, that I am not sure whether the Pope is Antichrist himself or only his apostle.' Ten days before he had written to the Pope that he swore before God and all His creatures that he had never dreamt of impeaching the Catholic Church, that there was nothing in heaven or earth that he preferred before her. And immediately after, in the following May, he declared that it was solely for the sake of the Elector Frederic and the university that he suppressed much which otherwise he should 'spue forth' against Rome, or rather Babylon, the spoiler of the Church and the perverter of the Holy Scriptures.'

Such was Luther's frame of mind whilst engaged in the famous disputation with John Eck at Leipzig during the months of June and July 1519.

When Eck, in the course of the controversy, objected against him that his views concerning the papal supremacy scarcely differed from those of the Hussites, and that the latter consequently boasted of having found in Luther a new supporter of their cause, Luther denied that he had anything in common with the Hussites; 'he had never,' he said, 'countenanced schismatics, and never would do so.' In February 1519 he had written that 'no matter could be great enough, or become great enough, to justify separation from the Roman Church; nay, that for no sin or evil of any kind that one could name or think of, ought one to renounce one's love for the Church and rend asunder its spiritual unity. Huss and the Hussites he hated as heretics, principally because they rejected the doctrine of purgatory and the worship of the saints.' In Leipzig also, he said, the Hussites had

acted very wrongly, because they had separated from the Roman Church.

Soon after this, however, he formed an entirely different opinion about the Hussites. On October 3, 1519, he received letters from two Hussite leaders, urging him to proceed courageously in the path he had entered on. 'What John Huss was formerly in Bohemia,' wrote the provost of the university of Prague, 'you, Martin, are now in Saxony. I charge you, therefore, to pray and to be strong in the Lord; do not despair if you are excommunicated as a heretic; remember what Christ suffered, and the Apostles.' The other Hussite exhorted him as follows: 'Do not let the Antichrist lay hold of you; he has a thousand ways of doing harm; may Christ preserve you!'

In February 1520 Luther came to recognise that he was in truth a Hussite, and that John Huss had proclaimed the true Gospel. 'The battle is the Lord's,' he wrote to Spalatin in February 1520, 'who did not come to bring peace on earth.' 'I, fool, without knowing it have taught and held all the doctrines of John Huss; we are all of us Hussites, without having been aware of it; yea, Paul and Augustine are Hussites to the very letter. For very terror I know not what to think about the awful judgments of God on mankind, for that men have burnt and condemned evangelical truth which has been openly proclaimed for more than a hundred years, and that one is not allowed to confess it.'

At the council of Costnitz he said that the Pope and his followers had set forth the doctrines of the dragon of hell in place of the Gospel, that 'Huss was a

noble martyr of Christ,' and that he ought to be canonised.

As Luther maintained that the Gospel truth had been revealed to him by God, and that he was the divinely appointed means for proclaiming it anew to the people, the question arose by what means the Papal Chair, as the seat of Antichrist, was to be fought against, and the true Gospel to acquire dominion over the earth.

The Hussites had spread their evangel with fire and sword, and Luther also in the first years, after he had acknowledged himself a Hussite, had no scruples about advising recourse to violent measures. 'I implore you,' he wrote to Spalatin in February 1520, 'if you rightly understand the Gospel, do not imagine that its cause can be furthered without tumult, distress, and uproar. You cannot make a "pen" out of a "sword," or "peace" out of "war." The Word of God is a sword, is warfare, is destruction, is wrath, is spoiling, is an adder's tongue, and, as Amos says, like the lion in the footpath and the bear in the forest.'

When Luther wrote these words he had already gained over to his evangel a powerful confederacy, on the strength of which he defied all the 'bans, threats, and spectres of his enemies.'

Luther's first confederates were the humanists. In their struggle against scholastic learning and ecclesiastical authority the latter welcomed this audacious reformer, and entered the lists for him in the same manner as they had previously done for Reuchlin.

'With their lips and their pens,' wrote Cochlæus, 'the humanists fought unweariedly for Luther, and disposed the hearts of the laity towards his cause.

They attacked the prelates and theologians with all manner of abusive and derisive language, accused them of covetousness, pride, envy, ignorance, and coarseness, and said that they only persecuted the innocent Luther because he was more learned than themselves, and because he had sufficient candour to speak out the truth' in opposition to the deceit and falsehood of hypocrites. As these humanists, besides being shrewd and gifted men, could also use both spoken and written language with eloquence and skill, it was an easy matter for them to excite pity and regard for Luther among the laity, and to make out that for the sake of truth and justice he was persecuted by a set of envious, grasping, unlearned clergy, who, living themselves in idleness and debauchery, endeavoured to get money out of the poor silly people by working on their superstitions. Luther's friendship with Philip Melanchthon, who already in early years had become famous as a humanist all over Germany, served to strengthen the favourable attitude of the 'poets' towards the 'Wittenberg herald of new truth.'

Luther himself had tried at a fairly early date to ingratiate himself with the humanist confederacy, and had addressed his homage in flattering letters to its leaders, Mutian, Reuchlin, and Erasmus. To Mutian, 'that most learned man, of most exquisite culture,' he spoke of himself as a 'barbarian who had always been accustomed to the cackling of geese,' and begged for the favour of his friendship. In a letter to Reuchlin on December 14, 1518, he called himself Reuchlin's successor, who, like him, was suffering persecution, but whose courage was undaunted; thanks to Reuchlin, Germany had begun to breathe again after long centuries during

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which it had been not simply crushed but almost annihilated. 'The beginnings of better knowledge,' he wrote to Reuchlin, 'could only come through a man endowed with no small portion of grace.' For as God had trodden into the dust of death the greatest of all mountains, Jesus Christ, and from that dust had sprung numbers of other mountains, so Reuchlin, he wrote, would have brought forth but little fruit if he too had not similarly been slain and trampled into dust, from which dust so many defenders of the Holy Scriptures had arisen. His language towards Erasmus was even more subservient. He was 'the ornament and hope of his age, a man after my own heart, with whom I commune daily in spirit,' so Luther wrote on March 28, 1519; 'for where is there any one whose inner being Erasmus does not take in at a glance, whom Erasmus does not instruct, whom Erasmus does not rule?' 'He himself,' he went on, 'during his time with the sophists had not even got so far as to be on terms of correspondence with any learned man, but now that his name had become known to Erasmus through the indulgence controversy, and that he had learnt from the preface to the new edition of the "Manual of a Christian Soldier" that Erasmus approved of his writings, he ventured to approach him and to beg for his favour.' He subscribed himself as his most devoted admirer.

Mutian, whom Luther approached first, was also the first among the prominent humanists who saw in Luther's proceedings against Rome the dawn of a better future; among his circle the 'new Hercules,' the 'second Paul,' found the most ardent supporters. In satires and university lectures Erfurt humanists,

such as Euricius Cordus, Justus Jonas, Eobanus Hessus, entered the lists against the 'unholy band' who were oppressing Luther, and it was a chief incentive to them that Erasmus, their venerated leader, had taken Luther's cause under his protection.

The works and letters of Erasmus were to the humanists a well-spring of ever fresh enthusiasm for Luther. 'Whoever read them,' wrote one of themselves, 'could no longer turn aside from the great work begun by Luther.'

After the example of Luther the humanists accustomed themselves to a Biblical style of language, which soon pervaded all humanistic literature; they even became of a sudden scholars of divinity, and delivered lectures on theological subjects. Whereas formerly a colleague of Mutian's had devoted a special lecture to the exposition of the 'Praise of Folly,' Eobanus Hessus, in 1519, chose the 'Manual of a Christian Soldier' as the subject of his discourse. Erasmus, he said, had brought the world back to the fountain of true piety, the Bible, and the yoke of superstition, hypocrisy, and degradation must now be thrown off. It was not to be tolerated that the Christian populace, the simple and unlearned masses, should be any longer deceived by foolish, deceitful trickery. Under the banner of Christ they must destroy the host of the enemy. Euricius Cordus praised Luther as the saviour and emancipator of piety, as a hero greater than Achilles. Justus Jonas saw in the whole world nothing but sin and corruption, and called for a complete breach with the past. But the most extravagant of them all was Crotus Rubianus, with whom Luther had in former

years stood in close friendship at Erfurt. After having, in 1518, in the character of a genuine humanist, extolled the Italian Petrus Pomponatius, who had questioned the immortality of the soul, and having welcomed him as an associate in the work of exterminating the sophists and monks, he now began to realise how greatly his ends would be furthered by Luther's campaign. He at once became 'biblically minded' and chose 'The sword of the Holy Scriptures' as his new watchword. On October 16, 1519, he wrote to Luther as his 'learned and saintly friend,' urging him, as the chosen of the Lord, to the most reckless steps against the 'Papal Chair, the seat of corruption, the very sight of which caused nausea.' The stroke of lightning which had once struck Luther to the ground at Erfurt was a sign that, like a second St. Paul, he had received a special call from heaven; he must go on as he had begun, and all Germany would receive the Word of God from him with rejoicing.

In Lower Germany, Luther, on his first coming forward, found the most enthusiastic supporters among the humanists, the Roman lawyers, and the patricians of Nuremberg; men like Christopher Scheurl, Hieronymus Ebner, Johann Holzschuher, Lazarus Spengler, and others vied with each other in tokens of approval. 'Luther has become Germany's most illustrious man,' wrote Scheurl in the year 1518; 'his name is on every one's lips.' 'His friends extol him, worship him, fight for him, and are ready to go through fire and water for him; they kiss his writings, they call him a herald of truth, a trumpet of the gospel, a preacher of the one Christ, through whom alone the Apostle Paul

speaks.' Even Albert Dürer could scarcely find words with which to praise Luther as a man enlightened by the Holy Ghost and a follower of the true Christian Faith, 'who had written with clearer vision than any other man who had lived during the last hundred and forty years.' From men like Luther, Dürer hoped for the realisation of the unity of the Christian Church, so that all unbelievers, as he said, 'on account of our good works may turn to us of their own accord and accept the Christian Faith.'

So too Dürer's friend Wilibald Pirkheimer was for many years a staunch supporter of Luther, till his eyes were opened to see the sad effects of the new Gospel, the 'evangelical' rascalism which became so common, and the not evangelical but diabolical libertinism of so many apostates, both men and women. Pirkheimer called the scholastic philosophers wild beasts and hobgoblins, who ought to be thrashed.

In the Latin satire 'Eccius Dedolatus,'[1] presumably written by Pirkheimer, a dialogue in the spirit of the 'Letters of Obscure Men,' Eck is held up to general scorn. He is represented as a thoroughly bad man and made to say 'that in heart he was one with Luther, for he was inspired only by the greed of gain, and that he played upon the superstition and stupidity of the people to get money out of them.'

Luther had also most zealous partisans among the humanists of Augsburg, Strassburg, Schlettstadt, Basle, and Zürich. The literary clubs in these towns distributed freely among the people pamphlets, fugi-

[1] *Der abgeholte Eck.* Dr. Charles Beard, in his *Life of Luther*, says of this title: 'Recollecting that "Eck" in German means "a corner," we may translate this "the corner planed away."'—TRANSLATOR.

tive pieces, and caricatures inimical to the Church. They sent hawkers round, who went from house to house and were only allowed to sell opposition literature.

The sale of Lutheran books was enormous, and side by side with them appeared thousands of leaflets, satires, and pasquils, which struck at all existing institutions of Church and society.

In no other period of German history did revolutionary journalism acquire such importance and such wide circulation as at that time. Crowds of adherents flocked round Luther, not from any preference for his religious opinions, but, as Melanchthon explains, because they looked upon him as the restorer of liberty, under which name each one understood the removal of whatever stood in his own way, and the attainment of the particular form of happiness he individually wished for. Many of his supporters were actuated by no other motive than the love of destroying. By speech and by pen they laboured for the destruction of social order, and undermined through all classes of society all respect for the inward restraints of religion and conscience, and the outward control of the law.

The most violent and at the same time the most gifted of these enemies of the existing order was Ulrich von Hutten. A man without any respect for or understanding of questions of Christian doctrine, he had from the first, while viewing Luther's controversy as a contemptible monkish quarrel, realised nevertheless how much it might advance his own ends. 'Perhaps you do not yet know,' he wrote to a friend in April 1518, 'that at Wittenberg, in Saxony, one party has risen up against the power of the Pope, while the

other party is defending papal indulgences with all its might. Monks are at the head of the combatants, and passionate, hot-headed, fanatical leaders they are, now shouting triumphantly, now wailing and lamenting. Lately they have also taken to writing. The printers have their work cut out for them.'

. . . . . .

'My hope is that they will mutually work each other's ruin. When a Brother of a certain order told me a short time ago what was going on in Saxony, I answered: "Bite and devour one another, so that ye be consumed of one another." Heaven grant that our enemies may fight each other as fiercely as possible, and finally destroy one another in internecine strife.' Even after the transactions of Luther with Cardinal Cajetanus, Hutten, at the end of October 1518, still viewed the matter from the same point of view; he rejoiced at the spectacle of theologians tearing each other to pieces. He, personally, he said, at about the same time, had set himself a distinct aim: amid his literary pursuits he did not intend to miss the opportunity of establishing his hereditary nobility by personal merit and deeds of prowess and adding to the fame and glory of his family; in his plans, he said, he reckoned with fortune; he could not lose anything by the venture, for he had not enough to live on as it was, but through good luck he might gain something.

He did not believe at that time that the Lutheran movement could forward his object of revolutionising political conditions in favour of the nobility. Towards the end of the year 1518 he published a pamphlet entitled the 'Türkenrede,' which had been written in May, in which he denounced not only the Court

of Rome but also the German princes and their reciprocal robbing and plundering, burning and pillaging, and foretold an early rising of the people. While he himself, the year before, had undertaken a mission from the Elector Albrecht of Mayence to the French Court, in order to conclude an alliance with Francis I., and to promise the latter Albrecht's vote at the election of a new Emperor, he now declared that it was a scandalous, ungerman, and treasonable plan to transfer the imperial crown to a foreigner, as though princely blood had died out in Germany. In an appendix to the 'Türkenrede' for 'all free and loyal Germans' he turned the point of his attack against Rome. Rome must take care, he said, that 'Liberty gagged and wellnigh strangled did not suddenly break loose.'

In order to be more free and independent in his fight against the 'ecclesiastical corrupters of Germany,' he now wished to leave the court of Mayence. Through the intervention of Erasmus, to whom Hutten appealed for help in March 1519, he was relieved from service at the Archbishop's court without having his salary withdrawn. For the publication of all manner of controversial writings, satires, and pamphlets he made use of the printing press of Schöffer at Mayence. In March and April 1519 he joined in the campaign for the expulsion of Duke Ulrich of Würtemberg. Full of ardent hope, he wrote to Erasmus before setting out: 'In a short time you will see all Germany in commotion.'

During this campaign he became intimately associated with Franz von Sickingen, of whom he speaks as 'a great man, every inch of him,' and one 'who will some

day achieve great fame among the German nation.' 'Sickingen is clever,' he wrote to Erasmus in June; 'he is eloquent; he grasps everything at once, and he is developing that capacity for action which is necessary in a commander. May God prosper the undertakings of this brave man, who will yet bring great glory to the German nation!'

Hutten had found in Sickingen the man he needed for the execution of his revolutionary plans. The 'young, inexperienced king,' so reckoned both the knights, would easily be won over to their plans. Hence they did all they could to secure his election as Emperor, and they hoped above all that Charles's younger brother Ferdinand would make common cause with them against 'barbarism.' 'We must try to win over Ferdinand,' Hutten wrote to Melanchthon; 'Sickingen would much like to bind him by some service.' Hutten dedicated to Ferdinand a polemical pamphlet purporting to date from the period of the conflict between Gregory VII. and Henry IV., in which he represented the latter as the ideal of an emperor, and claimed from the newly elected King Charles, as his highest duty, the liberation of Germany from the tyranny of papacy. Charles must take Henry IV. as his pattern; Ferdinand must encourage his brother in this course; he (Hutten) would stand by them both as a zealous adviser.'

In July, whilst awaiting the moment for weightier undertakings, Sickingen, at the instigation of Hutten, threw himself into the still pending Reuchlin affair, with the intention of settling the ecclesiastical struggle by the sword. To the joy of the humanists, as 'lovers of right and justice,' he threatened to declare a feud against Hoogstraten and the heads of the Domini-

can Order if they did not make amends to the pious and learned Reuchlin; and he also threatened to oppress the city of Cologne, whose magistrate was on the side of the Dominicans.

What Sickingen meant by a declaration of feud, and to what length his 'oppression' might go, the towns of Worms, Landau, and Metz, and the landgraviate of Hesse had been learning by gruesome experience since the year 1515. 'For the last two years,' said the burgomaster and the council of Worms in March 1517, in a public report, 'Sickingen has been devastating the land, cutting down the corn and the vines in the fields, setting fire to the fruit-trees, chopping off the hands and ears of the poor labourers at their work, and killing them in wanton cruelty; flogging women and young girls, and violating their honour; seizing young boys and putting many to death; plundering and wounding pilgrims, messengers, and merchants, and cutting crosses on their foreheads; flogging, lacerating, plundering, and making prisoners of priests and monks.' The humble demeanour of the Dominicans towards this dreaded robber-knight is easily understood, but no respect was felt for him. The convention of the Order, intimidated by Hutten, deprived Hoogstraten of the priorship of the Dominican monastery of Cologne, and also of the inquisitorship, and bound him over to silence.

By a papal brief, however, the latter was restored to his offices and the long-pending Reuchlin case was settled in favour of the Dominicans. The Pope declared the Bishop of Spires's decision invalid, interdicted the 'Augenspiegel' as an offensive and pernicious book unduly favourable to the Jews, and sentenced Reuchlin

to pay the whole costs of the lawsuit. Reuchlin's connection with the revolutionary barons now came to an end. In vain Sickingen offered him assistance and invited him to his castles. Reuchlin submitted to the decision of the head of the Church, and assumed towards Luther a decidedly orthodox attitude. He endeavoured to withdraw his great-nephew Melanchthon from the dangerous vicinity of this religious innovator, and in a letter to the Bavarian dukes he spoke so decisively against Luther that Hutten declared enmity against him. 'It is altogether unworthy of you,' wrote Hutten to Reuchlin, 'to fight against the party which attracts to it all men who have any honourable cause at stake—men whose associate you ought to be. But do as you please, and if your age allows it, go to Rome, where all your aspirations draw you, and kiss Pope Leo's toe; and go on writing against us to your heart's content. In spite of you, and the hubbub that you and these godless Romanists are making, we shall succeed in breaking the heaviest chains, and in freeing ourselves from the disgraceful bondage which you, as you boast, have always endured willingly, as though it were worthy of you. Luther's enterprise is distasteful to you, and you would gladly bring it to nought. But you will find in me a determined adversary not only if ever you should fight against Luther, but also if you submit yourself to the Pope.'

With Luther meanwhile Hutten had entered into close fraternity.

In the year 1519 his relations with the Archbishop of Mayence, from whom he received a salary, had debarred him from a public alliance with Luther. But in

January and February 1520 he made advances to the reformer through the medium of Melanchthon, to whom he wrote on January 20: 'Sickingen has charged me to make known to Luther that in case of his encountering opposition in his struggle, and having no hope of better help from any other quarter, he is to turn to him, and he will do all he can. Believe me he will scarcely obtain more trustworthy help in any other quarter. Luther is beloved by Sickingen.' His letter from Steckelberg on February 28 was still more pressing. 'Make haste and convey to Luther the message I sent him from Sickingen; but pray, between ourselves, I do not wish any one to know of my being mixed up in this affair. If difficulties accumulate round him he has no need to seek help from any others. With Franz at his side he may safely defy all his enemies. I am projecting great and important schemes with Sickingen. Were you here I would privately tell you all about them. I hope a bad end will overtake the barbarians and all who help to keep us under the Roman yoke. My dialogues, "The Romish Trinity" and "The Onlookers," are already in the press; they are remarkable for great freedom of expression against the Pope and the blood-suckers of Germany.'

In the first dialogue Hutten says: 'Against the poison which exudes from the heart of the Pope there is no antidote; his protecting shield is a sure refuge when all other forms of imposture—stratagem, deceit, trickery, cunning, and artifice—have failed.' 'The Pope is a bandit chief, and his gang bears the name of "the Church."' Why tarry we thus? Has Germany no longer any sense of honour? Has Germany no spirit left? If the Germans have none the Turks will

have plenty.' The sword of the Turks must be called in if the Christians have no spirit, and go on letting themselves be fooled by superstition and will not stir to punish the wrongdoers. There were three evils he wished to see befall the 'Roman cesspool,' the 'seat' of corruption'—plague, famine, and war. 'Rome is a sea of impurity, a mire of filth, a bottomless sink of iniquity: should we not flock from all quarters to compass the destruction of this common curse of humanity? Should we not set all our sail, saddle all our horses, let loose sword and fire?'

In April 1520, after the publication of the above pamphlet, Hutten had an interview at Bamberg with his ally Crotus Rubianus, which was followed by important results for the cause of the league. The intention of the confederates was to bring their collective influence to bear on Luther, in order to drive him to the most extreme measures against Rome, and to make use of him as a tool for their politico-clerical revolution.

From Bamberg, in the same month, Crotus once more appealed by letter to Luther as 'the greatest of theologians,' 'most excellent Polycletus,' urging him to persevere in his path. The creatures of the Pope might boast as they would, and praise the infallible teaching of the Church, but he held by the text: 'Thy Word is a lantern to my feet and a light unto my path.' It was for Luther to undertake the protection and custody of this light, and he would do well to comply with the invitation of Sickingen, the great leader of the German nobility. Luther's life was threatened by his enemies, but with Sickingen he would find security against all their plots. 'Be careful

of the future, is my advice; write to Sickingen; keep yourself in his favour.'

The morbid terror of pursuit and assassination from which Luther was already at that time suffering was greatly increased by these warnings of danger to his life. On April 16, 1520, he wrote to Spalatin that he had been warned that a certain doctor of medicine, who by means of magic could make himself invisible at will, had been sent to kill him; that his fears had been specially aroused by Hutten. 'Hutten cannot be urgent enough in his warnings,' he wrote; 'he is so dreadfully afraid of poison on my account.' This terror of pursuit grew later into a perfect monomania. Luther, carried away by the rush of the forces once let loose, followed the advice of Crotus. He wrote to Sickingen and Hutten even before the latter had ventured to enter into open alliance with him. In May 1520 the knight Sylvester von Schaumburg also assured him of his protection, and on June 4, 1520, Hutten wrote openly to him from Mayence. Under the watchword of 'Long live freedom' he begged him to make common cause with them, and casting off his pagan opinions, he put himself suddenly forward as a champion of the Gospel, and spoke in biblical language. 'We have not laboured altogether without result here. Christ be with us! Christ help us! For it is his precepts we are fighting for, his teaching, obscured by the mist of papal institutions, that we are bringing to light again, you successfully, I according to my powers.' 'We hate the assembly of wicked persons, and we will not sit in the seat of the scornful.'

'Nevertheless look well before you and keep your eyes open and your senses about you. Be strong and

fear not. In me you have a champion at every turn. Therefore be not afraid for the future to confide all your plans to me. We will fight together for liberty, and set free the Fatherland, so long held in bondage. Sickingen urges you to come to him; he will entertain you in a manner worthy of your dignity and protect you valiantly against enemies of all kinds. To-day I start on my journey to Ferdinand. I shall lose no time in doing there what I can for our cause.'

In Luther's circle great expectations were based on this journey. Melanchthon wrote on June 8, 1520: 'Hutten is betaking himself to Ferdinand, brother of King Charles, in order to prepare the way for freedom by the aid of the mightiest princes; what, then, may we not hope for?'

For the expenses of this journey to the Court of Brussels Hutten received money from Archbishop Albert of Mayence, with whom he was still on friendly terms, in spite of all his scurrilous writings against Rome. The Archbishop probably reckoned on the possibility that, in the event of the hoped-for separation of Germany from Rome and the establishment of a German national Church, the dignity of head of this Church might fall to him. 'Hutten has been here,' Agrippa von Nettesheim wrote from Cologne to a friend on June 16, 'with several other members of the Lutheran party, who are letting fly their shafts at the "courtiers," as they call them, and the Roman legates, and who are also full of hostility to the Pope himself. They are preparing the way, if God does not hinder it, for a great insurrection, and are urging on certain German princes, with ardent appeals, to shake off the Romish yoke. "What have we to do," they are clamouring, "with Romish

bishops? Have we not bishops and primates in Germany? Germany must have done with the Romans and return to her own primates and bishops and pastors." You see what they are aiming at. Already some of the towns and the princes are lending willing ears to them. What the might of the Emperor may be able to accomplish, I know not.'

The long dormancy of the Emperorship between the death of Maximilian in 1519 and the accession of the Emperor Charles had thrown Germany into a state of anarchy, which favoured the proceedings of the revolutionary party.

Luther's alliance with the revolution party was now an accomplished fact.

'In Sickingen,' so he wrote to Hutten, 'he placed greater confidence and hope than in any one of the princes.' 'It's my belief,' he said in a letter to Spalatin at the beginning of June 1520, 'that at Rome they have all become idiotic, maniacal, insensate fools, sticks, stones, hell-fiends, and devils.' When the knight Sylvester von Schaumburg offered, on June 11, to bring a hundred nobles to his assistance, Luther sent Sylvester's letter to Spalatin, with the following words: 'The die is cast; I despise the wrath of the Romans as much as their favour; never to all eternity will I again be reconciled to them, nor have any communion with them, though they should burn and damn me and all my belongings. And I too, in return, unless there should be no fire to be had, will publicly damn and burn the whole popish crew—that learned monster of heresy. Thus at last will there be an end of that fruitless observance of humility and submission by which I will no longer let the enemies of the Gospel

be magnified. Sylvester von Schaumburg and Franz von Sickingen have set me at rest from the fear of men.'

'Franz von Sickingen,' he says in a letter to a Brother of his Order, 'guarantees me, through Hutten, his protection against all my enemies. Sylvester does the same with regard to the Franconian nobles. I have had a beautiful letter from him. Now I have no more fears, and I am bringing out a book against the Pope on the improvement of the Christian estate. I attack his Holiness in it mercilessly, as though he were the Antichrist.'

This book, which appeared at the beginning of August 1520, was the 'Address to the Christian Nobility of the German Nation,' and the actual declaration of war of the Lutheran-Hutten revolutionary party.

The proposals it contained with regard to the suppression of secular iniquities were such as to command sympathy for Luther from many who opposed his religious views. 'In the first place,' he says, 'there is imperative need of agreement on the part of the German nation against the extravagant superfluity and costliness of clothing, by which so many nobles and rich people have been impoverished. Has not God given to us, as to other countries, wool, hair, flax, and other materials amply sufficient for seemly and comfortable clothing for all classes, so that we have no need to squander recklessly such terrible sums on silk, velvet, and cloth of gold, and all manner of other outlandish wares?'

Similarly, there was, he said, no need for such large outlay on spices and groceries, which was one of the

drains by which money was carried off from the German land. But the greatest curse of the German nation was undoubtedly the practice of buying on credit; if that was not allowed many a one would have to go without buying his silk, velvet, cloth of gold, spices, and all the rest of the luxuries. 'Verily this buying on credit was a sign and a token that the world was sold to the devil with heavy sins, which must ruin us, both spiritually and temporally.'

It was high time, indeed, to curb the Fuggers and other like companies. Could it possibly be godly and righteous that such a pile of kingly goods and treasures should be heaped up in the life of a human being? It would be far more godly to increase and spread agriculture and to restrict commerce; how much better were those who, according to the Scriptures, tilled the earth and got their food out of it, following the Bible precept: 'In the sweat of thy brow shall thou eat bread!'

In these statements Luther was reiterating what the theological political economist of the fifteenth century had preached over and over again.

'Then,' he goes on, 'there is the excess in eating and drinking, for which we Germans have a bad reputation in foreign lands as our special vice, and which cannot be mended by preaching only, so firmly has it taken root and got the mastery of us. The waste of money that it causes would be the least evil; but in its train follow murder, adultery, theft, blasphemy, and every other vice. The temporal power should do something here, or it will come to pass, as Christ foretells, that "the last day will come like a thief in the night, and ye shall be eating and drinking, marrying

and giving in marriage, building and planting, buying and selling," just as things are going on now, and that so vigorously that I much fear the day of judgment is at hand, though we do not concern ourselves about it.' 'Finally,' he adds, 'is it not a lamentable thing that we Christians should have among us free and public brothels? If the people of Israel maintained itself without such a disgrace, why should not a Christian nation be able to do as much? If so many of the small towns, villages, and hamlets can do without such houses, why cannot the great cities do the same?'

All these opinions, which are to be found in the concluding pages, are deserving of praise, but they did not form the substance of the address, the pith and marrow of which was that Luther, associating himself closely with Huss and with Hutten, attacked in its foundations the whole existing fabric of Church organisation, and made demands which aimed at the subversion of all traditional authority.

Starting from the Hussite doctrine of universal priesthood, he declared that all Christians were of the priestly caste. 'Whatever issues from baptism,' he says, 'may boast that it has been consecrated priest, bishop, pope.' There was no difference among Christians, except the nominal one of 'office.'

'And if it should happen that any one appointed to one of these offices were deposed for abuses he would be just what he was before he was ordained.' 'If the community has deposed him, he becomes again a simple peasant, or citizen, just like the rest.'

Since all Christians are priests, all have the power to judge and decide what is right or wrong in belief; the standard of judgment is Holy Writ, which each one

must interpret according to his reasonable faith. No one must let 'the spirit of liberty, as St. Paul calls it, be cowed by words invented by the Pope; on the contrary, it behoves every Christian to understand the faith that he accepts, and to condemn all errors.'

This peculiar priesthood of Luther's and this Christian community invested with hierarchical prestige, each member of which was free to construct his own creed according to his own interpretation of Scripture, were to be subject to the temporal power. 'Forasmuch as the temporal power is ordained by God to punish the wicked and to protect the good, therefore it must be allowed to do its work, unhindered, on the whole Christian body, without respect of persons, whether it strike popes, bishops, priests, monks, nuns, or whom it will;' 'whatever ecclesiastical law has said to the contrary, is only the invention of Romish arrogance.' Above all, 'when necessity demands it, the secular power should provide for the meeting of a truly free council.' And in case of the Pope's opposing such an assembly, and denouncing and anathematising it, his proceedings should be treated with contempt, like the behaviour of a madman, and he himself must in return be anathematised and placed under a ban.'

'This free council, which is to be called together by secular authority, in defiance of the Pope, must reorganise the constitution of the Church from its foundations, and must liberate Germany from the Romish robbers, from the scandalous, devilish rule of the Romans.' Rome was sucking out the Germans to such an extent that 'it is a wonder that we have anything left to eat.' The Pope lived in such pomp and splen-

dour on the wealth of the Germans that 'whenever he goes out riding he is accompanied by three or four thousand mule-riders, more than the escort of any king or emperor!' Small wonder if God were to rain brimstone and fire down on Rome, and doom it to destruction, as he did with Sodom and Gomorrah. O noble princes and sirs, how long will you suffer your land and your people to be the prey of these ravening wolves?' Luther was not content with imitating the language of Crotus Rubianus and Hutten; he even surpassed it in his description of Rome, which was such an iniquitous abode of plunder and theft, lying and cheating, that the rule of Antichrist himself could not be more abominably wicked. 'Meanwhile, since this devilish state of things is not merely open robbery, deceit and tyranny, such as proceeds from the gates of hell, but also destroys Christianity, body and soul, we are bound to use all diligence to put a stop to it. If we wish to fight the Turks let us begin here, where they are worst.'

'Either the secular power, or a general council, should prohibit for the future all payments of money to Rome, and should abolish all papal commendams and reservations; every courtling who comes from Rome should be strictly commanded to withdraw, to jump into the Rhine or the nearest river, and to administer a cold bath to the Interdict, seal and letter and all. The German bishops must no longer be mere puppets and tools of the Pope. It should be decreed by an Imperial law that no episcopal mitre, and no confirmation of any appointment shall for the future be obtained from Rome. Also the 'reserved cases'[1] (*casus*

[1] ('Casus reservati' refers to those great sins for which the Pope or the bishops claimed that they only could give absolution.—TRANSLATOR.)

reservati) should be abolished, and the oaths of allegiance to the Pope which bishops are compelled to take. All matters relating to ecclesiastical fiefs and benefices should be settled by the Primate of Germany with the assistance of a general consistory.

By proposals of this sort Luther hoped to gain favour with the German Church dignitaries, especially the Archbishop of Mayence, the German Primate; his schemes for circumscribing the territory of the Church, and for depriving the Pope of the suzerainty of Naples would, he hoped, attach the Emperor to his cause, while the nobles would be attracted by hopes of cathedrals and abbeys for their younger sons.

Concerning Church ordinances and ceremonies he said: 'We should abolish all Saints' days or keep them on Sundays. Festivals, church-treasures, and ornamentation are offensive and pernicious; anniversaries must be abolished or reduced in number, chapels and *Feldkirchen* (field-churches) rased to the ground. As it was to be feared that the many masses that had been endowed would provoke the wrath of God, it was advisable to endow no more, and to abolish many already endowed. All pilgrimages undertaken as "good works" must be forbidden; but if they were undertaken to gratify curiosity and the desire to see new lands, people might be left to do as they pleased.' All fasts enjoined by the Church must be abolished. The Church punishments, such as interdicts, bans, suspension of priests, and so forth, 'had been introduced into the heavenly kingdom of Christ by the spirit of evil, and were odious plagues and curses;' an interdict more particularly was a greater crime than the strangling of twenty

popes. Above all the canon law must be swept away from the first letter of it to the last—particularly the decretals. 'Everything that the Pontificate has instituted or ordained is calculated only to multiply sin and error.'

'It is stated that there is no finer government in the world than that of the Turks, who have neither a spiritual nor a secular code of law, but only their Koran. And it must be acknowledged that there is no more disgraceful system of rule than ours, with our canon law and our common law, whilst no class any longer obeys either natural reason or the Holy Scriptures.'

'May God give to us all,' says Luther in conclusion, 'a Christlike understanding, and to the Christian nobility in particular a Christian mind and will to do the best for our poor Church!'

At this period Luther appears to have had implicit confidence not only in the nobles but also in the Emperor Charles. In the opening lines of his letter he says: 'God has given us a noble young sovereign for our head, in order that many hearts may be roused to great and good hopes.'

With unsparing energy Luther endeavoured to stir up German national feeling against Italy and in favour of his own cause. According to him the Italians were steeped in every kind of vice, and yet so proud and haughty that they looked upon the Germans as scarcely human.

Luther's address to the German nobility was a martial summons to the fiercest onslaught.

Simultaneously with this address Luther published, with an accompanying marginal commentary, a pamphlet that had been written against himself by Sylvester

Prierias, 'on the Pope as an infallible teacher.' In the preface to this pamphlet he calls pontifical Rome a 'synagogue of Satan's;' congratulates the Greeks and the Bohemians, who have severed themselves from the Romish Babylon, and execrates all who have any connection with Rome. 'Go to now, unhappy reprobate, godless man; may God's wrath overtake you, as you richly deserve!' In the epilogue he throws out a distinct challenge to a war of religion. 'If the madness of the Romanists goes on like this,' he says, 'there seems to me no other way of escape than for the Emperor, the kings, and the princes to have recourse to arms, to make them ready for battle, to declare war against this pest of the universe, and to bring the matter to an issue not with words, but with iron and steel. If we punish thieves with the halter, murderers with the sword, heretics with the stake, why do we not still more chastise, with every weapon we can lay hands on, these teachers of corruption, these cardinals, these popes, and all the crawling vermin of this Romish Sodom, who go on unceasingly corrupting, degrading, ruining the Church of God? Why do we not wash our hands in their blood?'

For such outbursts of unbridled passion there is but one explanation, which we find in some of his confidential utterances to his friends. In a letter to Johann Lange on August 18, 1520, Luther wrote that against the papacy, 'the seat of the real veritable Antichrist,' he considered every possible mode of attack permissible for the sake of the salvation of souls.

The fury of his enemies, he said in another letter, was so great that he was no longer master of him-

self, and was impelled by he knew not what manner of a spirit.

'Your overbearing temper,' wrote Hieronymus Emser, court chaplain and secretary of Duke George of Saxony, to Luther, his former friend, 'your overbearing temper cannot brook that any one should contradict you by speech or by pen, lets you listen to no one, allows no one to know better than you. For this reason it cannot verily be the Spirit of the Lord, but must be some other spirit; for, as the prophet says, the Spirit of the Lord dwells with none but the humble-minded, the lowly, and the peaceable. Now it is everywhere notorious that you, like a wild and tempestuous sea, neither by day nor by night have any rest and peace for yourself, and will not allow other people to be at rest, but as waves dash up against the ships so you rub yourself up now against this person, now against that, and are always seeking whom you may quarrel with. By my faith as a priest, in place of an oath, I say it, I have never conceived in my heart hatred or envy against your person, but only against your presumptuous behaviour to our Mother, the Holy Christian Church, against your false doctrines and your perverse interpretations of the Scriptures, which are contrary to all Christian teaching; against these I am and ever shall be incensed, and so much the more as from day to day "the more you spin the coarser your thread becomes." I have now three times warned you as a brother, and entreated you for the love of God, to spare and have pity on this poor nation which is growing visibly irritated by this business, and you answer me at last with the words: "Let the Devil have his way; the

matter was not begun for the love of God, and it shall be ended for the love of God."'

At the end of the year 1520 Emser writes that the time of the visitation of the German people has now come. 'Worthy Germans,' he says, 'God is visiting and proving each one of you, in order to see how steadfast and loyal each of you will remain to the holy faith and to the Christian Church. Hitherto, praised be the Germans in this for evermore, it has never come to pass that any single German emperor, king, prince, or community, after having once acknowledged the Christian faith, has fallen away from it again, or become heretical, like the princes, kings, and emperors of other nations, who have often let themselves be so miserably seduced by heretics that they have become renegades to the faith of Christ, have worshipped gods that are no gods, have destroyed churches and monasteries, have persecuted, driven out, and slain priests, bishops, and popes—one here, another there, as the chronicles credibly show. Furthermore, whole provinces, empires, and kingdoms have sometimes in the time of their visitation been led away from the holy faith through curious prying into new doctrines and obstinate persistence in their sins. The two largest quarters of the world, Asia and Africa, have withdrawn from the Roman dominion and Church, so that scarcely any Christians are to be found there; and in the third quarter, Europe, no small number have followed this example. And now the turn has come for us Germans, as indeed was foretold many years ago, that in these our days a monk would lead the German nation into great errors, as in truth Christ himself has warned us generally

that wolves would come among us in sheep's clothing.'

'And now, whereas openly in the day time, with all vehement earnestness and purpose, Martin Luther, an Augustinian monk, has dared and presumed for a long time, through much strange and novel teaching, disputation, preaching, and writing, to throw contempt on the chief overseers and prelates of the Church, to give free licence to sin, thereby to gain over the common people and make the German nation independent of the Roman Church, there is verily cause for fear that this man is not far removed from that one, or perhaps is the very same, whom the prophecies have foretold, and against whom Christ and the Apostles warned us.'

Luther's proceedings, it was asserted, were entirely opposed to Gospel teaching; 'for the Gospel teaches us that in no case, even if they have sinned, are we to allow our prelates to be put to open shame, scourging, and disgrace; furthermore it is contrary to the natural as well as to the statute rights of emperors, who are enjoined to inflict capital punishment for sins of this sort and contempt of majesty. The Gospel nowhere teaches us that we ought to stir up such discord, tumult, and division among the people. Cyprian says: "Whosoever disturbs the peace of Christ and the concord of the people of God, is not with Christ but against him." Neither does the Gospel say that we ought to despise the commandments, ordinances, and opinions of the Church, and oppose them with such sacrilege, and still less that we ought to cause scandal and vexation to any one.'

'But what has ever been more scandalous, injurious, poisonous to the German nation than Luther's teaching,

books, and writings, which in so short a time have occasioned such quarrelling, tumult, and uproar, that there is no province, town, village, or house which is not torn by party spirit and where people are not divided one against the other? And this not for a trifling cause, but for the sake of the holy Christian faith, which our forefathers handed down to us and which they served so steadily and loyally, by deeds rather than by words.'

'Luther,' said Emser, 'brought forth his errors not from his own storehouse, but from the books of his models and examples, Wickliffe and Huss. It was from them that he learnt to call the Pope Antichrist, Christians Romanists, and heretics Christians, and to reject the holy Sacraments, the Mass, the consecration of priests, and all Christian ritual and ordinances. He despised all Church authority, all the doctrines of the Fathers, and referred each one for himself to the Holy Scriptures. But if every fanatic were to interpret the Scriptures according to his own taste, the Bible would have more meanings than there were heads to the Hydra, and there would never be any agreement in the matter. Through the rejection and contempt of all Church ordinances and authority the fear of God would be extinguished in the land, and what manner of obedience would then be yielded to the secular ruler, every honest man could decide for himself. There were two assertions of Luther's which were most especially subversive of all order and discipline: "Christ has made us free from all laws of man," and, Call it what you will, what has been decreed by man is the work of man, and nought that is good can ever come of it."' 'The liberty,' says Emser, on which Luther insists,' St. Peter calls 'a cloak

of maliciousness,' and St. Paul an occasion of sin.' 'One must not thus utterly despise the works of men, or speak of them so indiscreetly before the common people, as to say that never at any time did or could any good come of what was decreed or ordained by men, nor any good could ever result therefrom; for what would King Charles, or any future Council of State, be able to accomplish for a reformation, or for opinions and ordinances, if we approached them with the assertion that from their laws no good thing could at any time proceed?' Reforms were urgently needed, but Luther was not agitating for the reform of abuses and scandals, but for the sweeping away of the Church itself, for the uprooting of its divine foundation, and if his schemes succeeded there would be anarchy among all classes, in the Church and in society, such as had followed in Bohemia from the agitation of the Hussites.

'Open your eyes,' he writes imploringly to Luther, 'and behold the wretched misery, heresy, error, degradation, destruction, and murder of God's worship and glory which has come upon the Bohemians through the teaching of Huss—a noble kingdom laid waste, ruined, and disgraced, as the people themselves feel more and more.'

'See that you do not bring us Germans into a plight such as that into which Huss led the Bohemians; for it would almost seem as if you were sparing no trouble and turning all your energies to bring things to this pass. God preserve us from your ideas!'

After long and mature deliberations a papal bull was completed on June 15, 1520, which condemned twenty-four statements of doctrine contained in Luther's

writings, ordered the destruction of the books in which they occurred, and directed that Luther himself, after an interval of sixty days allowed him for recantation, should be delivered up to the full severity of ecclesiastical punishment. 'After the pattern of the divine mercy, which does not will the death of the sinner, but rather that he should repent and live, we have resolved,' said the Pope, 'disregarding the insults against ourselves and this Apostolic Chair, to use the utmost clemency, and as much as lies in our power to do everything to induce the Brother Martin, by gentle methods, to repent and to renounce his errors. By the depths of the Divine compassion, and by the blood of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, which he shed for the human race and for the foundation of our holy Church, we exhort and conjure the Brother Martin himself, as also all his followers and supporters, that they do desist from further disturbing the peace, unity, and truth of the Church, for which the Saviour has prayed so earnestly, and that they do renounce their corrupting heresies.'

By a grievous error of judgment Luther's opponent Eck was entrusted with the proclamation of the bull and the execution of its sentence, as regarded Luther's partisans, in several of the German dioceses. In Leipzig, where the bull was to be posted up, Eck was in danger of his life from the Wittenberg students, and in Erfurt the fury and violence of the young academicians were equally uncontrollable. All existing copies of the obnoxious decree were carried off from the book-shops and either torn up or thrown into the river Gera. When the news spread that Eck was coming to Erfurt, armed students went forth to meet him.

To Luther himself it made no difference who was

selected to proclaim the bull, for he had been firmly resolved ever since 1519 to break for ever with the Papal Chair and the Catholic Church. In his treatise on the 'Babylonish Captivity of the Church' he had once more represented the Pope as Antichrist, he had rejected the doctrines of the sevenfold number of the Holy Sacraments and of the Sacred Mass, and at the same time by novel views concerning marriage had attacked the recognised basis of the Christian family. He not only robbed marriage of its sacramental character, but removed the prohibition of marriage between Christians and non-Christians. With regard to certain circumstances of married life he laid down principles unheard of before in Christian Europe. Already at that time he put forward the same views which he expressed at a later date in a German 'Sermon on Married Life' in the following words: 'Know then that marriage is an outward matter, like any other worldly transaction. Just as I may eat, drink, sleep, walk, ride, buy, talk, and do business with a heathen, a Jew, a Turk, a heretic, so also I may marry any of them. Do not give heed to the fool's law which forbids this. One finds plenty of Christians who are more hardened in unbelief inwardly, the greater part of them indeed, than any Jew, heathen, Turk, or heretic. A heathen is just as much a man or a woman created by God as St. Peter, St. Paul and St. Lucia; be silent then, thou false, mischievous Christian.'

After the proclamation of the bull, Luther appealed, on November 17, 1520, from the Pope, as from 'an unjust judge, a stiffnecked, erring heretic and apostate, condemned by all the writings of Scriptures,' to a general

council of Christians, and called upon the Emperor and the princes and the whole commonwealth to withstand the unchristian proceedings and the monstrous sacrilege of the Pope. Whoever submitted to the Pope, he (Martin Luther) delivered up to the Divine tribunal. 'Never once since the creation of the world,' he said in a letter to Spalatin, 'had Satan spoken out so shamelessly against God as in this bull; it was impossible that any one could be saved who either supported it or did not fight against it.' 'I have come to the conviction,' he wrote to another friend, 'that nobody can be saved who does not with all his might make war to the death against the statutes and mandates of the Pope and the bishops.' Starting from his accustomed premiss that 'his teaching alone was the truth,' he said amongst other things, in a treatise 'Against the Bull of Antichrist:' 'I have always held that whoever sets error above truth denies God and worships the Devil; and that is what this most precious and famous Bull tries to compel us to do with threats of interdict.' 'Who could wonder if the princes, nobles, and laity were to knock the Pope, bishops, priests, and monks on the head and drive them all out of the country? Is it not an unheard-of, an outrageous thing in Christendom that Christian people should be publicly commanded to deny and condemn the truth and to destroy it by fire? Is it not heretical, false, scandalous, misleading, insufferable stuff for all Christian ears? But now all things are turned upside down, and I hope it has become manifest that the Pope, bishops, priests, and monks are ringing their own knell and not Dr. Luther's with this wicked and scandalous bull, and summoning the laity

to cut their own throats.' 'The bull deserves that all true-hearted Christians should trample it under foot, and send the Romish Antichrist, and Dr. Eck his apostle, about their business with fire and sword.'

Simultaneously with this Lutheran storm Ulrich von Hutten also broke out in revolutionary proceedings. 'Already the axe is laid to the roots,' he wrote in a pamphlet addressed 'To all Free-men in Germany' in May 1520, 'and every tree shall be cut down that beareth not good fruit. The vineyard of the Lord shall be cleansed. This is no longer a thing you may *hope* for; you will see it soon with your eyes. Meanwhile be of good heart, ye men of Germany, and encourage each other to good cheer. Your leaders are not weak and inexperienced, but strong for the recovery of freedom.'

On his return home from his journey to the court of the Archduke Ferdinand, whom he had endeavoured, without success, to win over for the great cause against Rome, Hutten learnt that a papal brief had been sent to the Archbishop of Mayence enjoining the latter to put a stop to his (Hutten's) presumptuous and dangerous agitations, and if necessary to use strong measures against him. This brief threw Hutten into the greatest fury and fanned his dreams of a sacerdotal war into fiery determination. 'Hutten has written me letters,' says Luther to his friend Spalatin on September 11, 1520, 'which breathe fury against the Pope. He intends now, he writes, to combat priestly tyranny with all his weapons of ink and steel. The Pope is pursuing him with dagger and poison, and has ordered the Archbishop of Mayence to take him prisoner and send him in chains to Rome.' Luther

says in a later letter to Spalatin, October 3: 'Hutten is arming against the Pope with indomitable spirit, and is fighting it out with his sword and his wit.'

Hutten's 'wit' had its fling in September 1520 in several printed letters which he addressed from Ebernburg, the chief stronghold of his friend Sickingen, to the Emperor Charles, the Elector Frederic of Saxony, and all the Estates of the Empire. His cause, he said in the first letter, was the cause of the Emperor; it was only on account of his imperialist views that he was persecuted by Rome; Charles was appointed by Providence to destroy the dominion of the Pope, which was a disgrace to the German nation. He openly confessed to the Emperor that he had contemplated a complete subversion of the existing order of things. 'Rome, the great Babylon, the mother of all the most execrable, inhuman deeds of the universe, Rome, which has poisoned and corrupted the whole earth,' he says in his letter to Frederic of Saxony, 'Rome must be overthrown.' 'Can this tyranny be allowed to go on growing worse? Must it not be stamped out? But who is to achieve this consummation? God Almighty! None other than God Himself; but through the instrumentality, as always, of human hands. And what part will you take, you princes and lords? What counsel and support will you contribute?' He then appeals to the princes to come to the help of himself and his confederates against this many-horned, savage beast, or otherwise, so he threatens, he will find some other remedy for the disease. In Rome in olden times Cato the elder had said that the rulers and officers who might prevent evil and who did not do so ought to be stoned to death. The present issue could not be settled without slaughter

and bloodshed. Desperate diseases required desperate remedies. So it must be in this case; no other means will serve.' 'If the Emperor wishes it, we will give back Rome to him, and the Roman Bishop shall be put on an equality with other bishops. The number of the clergy must be reduced by one per cent., and the monastic orders entirely done away with. His address 'to Germans of all classes,' in which he again vividly depicted the 'Romish master-craftsman in deceit, the fountain of all roguery,' concluded with these words from one of the Psalms: 'Let us rend their fetters asunder and cast away their cords from us.'

When Luther received through Crotus Rubianus these fire-brand letters of Hutten's he wrote to Spalatin: 'I am beginning to believe that this hitherto irresistible Pontificate may really be overturned, contrary to all expectation, or that the day of judgment is at hand.'

On December 5, 1520, Crotus had again addressed himself to Luther, calling him 'the most holy High Priest, the most evangelical being that the heavenly powers had given to this degenerate age, and proffering him his unqualified devotion and co-operation. As to those people of Cologne who had burnt Luther's books, Crotus said that in so doing they had burnt the Gospel of Christ, or rather Christ himself.

Five days later Luther, in his character of 'New Evangelist,' convoked the professors and students of Wittenberg outside the Elster Gate, and in their presence he burnt the papal bull and the books of the Canon law, saying as he did so: 'Because thou hast destroyed the Holy One of the Lord, therefore I destroy

thee in everlasting fire.' And then he invoked the name of the Apostle Paul, who had burnt the books of the sorcerers. 'This deed of Luther's, the like of which had never before been heard of in all Christendom,' says the Bernese chronicler Anshelm, 'has caused great surprise and indignation.'

The following day Luther declared to his audience in the university that this bonfire was only a trifle; it was imperative to burn the Pope himself—that is to say, the Papal Chair. Whoever did not, with all his heart, struggle against papacy could not attain salvation. 'The clearness and the beauty of his fatherly address,' an eye-witness assures us, 'were so convincing that one must have been more senseless than a stick not to perceive that all that Luther said was Gospel truth, and he himself an angel of the living God, called by Him to feed his erring sheep with the words of truth.'

After the year 1520[1] Luther's Latin and German publications were frequently accompanied by a woodcut in which he was represented with a glory round his head, or with the Holy Ghost in the form of a dove hovering over him. Among the populace it

[1] See Schuchardt, ii. 312–313, catalogue of the writings, where there occurs one of these woodcuts, from a drawing by Lucas Cranach. In a reprint of the Latin edition of *De Captivitate Babylonica* this picture is found with the following inscription at the bottom:—

'Numina coelestem nobis peperere Lutherum,
Nostra diu majus saecla videre nihil.
Quem si pontificum crudelis deprimit error,
Non feret iratos impia terra deos.'

See my pamphlet *Ein zweites Wort an meine Kritiker* ('A Second Word to my Critics'), p. 69 (new edition, 1895, p. 70). Luther's portrait was first engraved in copper by Lucas Cranach in the year 1519, then in 1520, and again in 1521 (Schuchardt, ii. 189–191). For the oldest pictures of Luther see the *Katholik*, 1894, ii. 191.

was rumoured that in Wittenberg, while Luther was burning the papal decretals and bulls, angels had been seen up in the clouds, looking on with approval at the spectacle.

In a letter which recounts this popular rumour we read that 'Luther holds out the threat that seven provinces have sworn to support him, that the Bohemians have promised him 35,000 men, and the Saxons and other tribes of the north as many more, in order to invade Italy and Rome, after the example of the Goths and Vandals.' 'The poison has gone so deep,' this letter goes on to say, 'that it can scarcely be got rid of without great suffering of all sorts; for all classes of Germans who are opposed to the clerical orders, and whose hearts are set on plunder, look upon Luther's scheme as an opportunity for demolishing the hated and opulent race of ecclesiastics, and for turning everything upside down.' Not all Luther's friends, however, concurred in these violent measures. Wolfgang Capito, court preacher to the Archbishop of Mayence, warned Luther on December 4 against exciting the people to fury. 'You are frightening your supporters away from you,' he wrote, 'by your constant reference to troops and arms. We can easily enough throw everything into confusion, but it will not be in our power, believe me, to restore things to peace and order.' Besides the people were by no means to be relied on. 'Experience teaches how easily the masses are moved; to-day they are all for us, to-morrow all against us.' The court preacher was not a little alarmed at Luther's having so often sounded a trumpet-note of war and incited Hutten to battle, and at his expressed intention of 'soon making an attempt with arms.'

According to Hutten's plan the war of religion was to begin in this very year 1520.

On December 9 of this year Hutten communicated to his 'dearest brother and friend Luther,' 'to the invincible herald of the Divine Word,' a more detailed account of his progress. 'Whilst I am gaining new adherents and supporters,' he writes, 'old ones fall away; so deep-rooted and widespread is still the superstition that whoever rises against the Pope commits an unpardonable sin. Franz Sickingen is the only one who stands by us with unswerving loyalty.' And even Sickingen had almost begun to waver, but he (Hutten) had so fed his enthusiasm that now scarcely a day passed without his having something from Luther's or Hutten's writings read out to him at supper. To all friends who tried to dissuade him from supporting Luther Sickingen had represented that the welfare of the Fatherland required that 'Luther's and Hutten's counsels should be listened to, and the true faith defended.' Meanwhile Hutten goes on: 'I do not conceal from you, dearest brother, that Franz has hitherto restrained me from active measures against our enemies, in order to lead them on to greater presumption. Moreover he considers it advisable to await what the Emperor shall decide.' Sickingen hopes, he says, that the Emperor will realise what is to be expected from the Pope and his following; a great split between the Pope and the Emperor is predicted, and Sickingen will appeal to the Emperor at the proper moment. 'I have just written to Spalatin asking him to sound the Elector as to his intentions, and to inform me of them as far as he can. I want to know, for instance, how far we may reckon on his protection, and I should like this to be known not only to

you, but also to all who will help us with their swords. Do you too, I beg of you, insist on this. You have no idea how immensely serviceable to our cause it would be that the Elector should either aid those who have taken up arms, or should at least be willing to connive at our enterprise so far as to allow us to take refuge in his territory if the state of affairs should make it necessary. As soon as I have got this information I think of coming to you in person; for I can no longer put off seeing face to face a man I so greatly admire for his virtues.'

With this letter Hutten sent Luther his latest poetical writings, in the hope that he would have them published at Wittenberg. In these verses, destined for the people, and therefore written in the German language, he urges an armed rising of the nation against the papacy and the clergy:

Upon the nobles proud I call,
Ye pious towns, too, rouse ye all;
We'll stand together for our right;
Leave me not lonely in the fight.
Have pity on the Fatherland,
Ye valiant Germans, lift the hand!
Now is the time to wield the sword
For Liberty: so wills the Lord.

High and low must join together in the war for religion:

I summon all the princely host,
The noble Emperor Charles foremost,
That they support right valiantly
The cities and nobility.
All men whose hearts this does not sway
No love for Fatherland have they,
Nor do they rightly God obey.
Flock hither every German youth
And with God's help sound forth the truth!

Landsknechts and troopers, do your part,
And all who have a patriot's heart,
To root out superstition black
And bring the truth of heaven back.
And, since no gentle means bestead,
We must have warfare and bloodshed!
Armour and horse we have galore,
Of swords and halberds a goodly store,
And we will use them, by the Lord,
If they are deaf to warning word.
We'll heed no more how men may yelp,
Almighty God will be our help!

Hutten was also prepared to seek aid from foreign countries:

Now hear me swear upon my soul,
If God with favour on me look,
Who ne'er the righteous yet forsook,
I'll cleanse the Empire with my hands,
Though help I crave from foreign lands.

In another pamphlet, with the lengthy title '*Anzeige, wie allwegen sich die römischen Bischöfe oder Päpste gegen die deutschen Kaiser gehalten haben*,' he presumed to instruct the Emperor Charles in his duties and privileges with regard to Rome. As an imperial papist he said that the emperors formerly, before they became subject to the Pope, had had the power of appointing and deposing the Christian bishops. The despotic Henry IV., he said, was a hero in his eyes, although not born in German land. But the greater his valour, spirit, and virtue, the more he had had to suffer persecution from the Popes; for as soon as they began to recognise his great courage and ability they set themselves against him, to prevent his rising up over their heads. And this not in the case of one or two Popes only, but with four or five of them, amongst whom, however, that exe-

crable monk, by name Hildebrand, pressed him most sorely.

Hutten's historical knowledge was most extraordinary. In proof of the rights that former emperors had exercised against the popes he related that the Emperor Otto III. had had Pope John XIV.'s eyes put out; in proof of the tyranny that popes had been guilty of in murdering emperors he informed his readers that Clement IV. had had King Conrad IV. put to death. In these statements there was not a word of truth.

With a view to feeding the frenzy of the populace Hutten now published his Latin dialogues in German, as a *Gesprächbüchlein*. The moral of them was set forth in a picture on the title-page. On the right hand, at the top, stands King David addressing God the Father (who is depicted on the left hand hurling down lightning) with the words of the psalmist: 'Arise, thou Judge of the world, and reward the proud after their deserving.' In the middle space Luther and Hutten appear side by side as the twin heralds of freedom. At the bottom of the page armed warriors with outstretched spears are chasing a crowd of yelling priests who are fleeing in terror, while the Pope, the cardinals, and the bishops are just visible below them. At the end of the book also there is a pictorial representation of Luther and Hutten side by side, and it became customary to depict these two together as 'inseparable instruments of God.' 'God has sent forth two specially chosen, bold, and enlightened messengers,' said Eberlin of Günzburg in his pamphlet 'Fünfzehn Bundesgenossen' ('Fifteen Confederates'), which appeared in 1521. 'These two messengers are

Martin Luther and Ulrich von Hutten: they are both natives of Germany, deeply learned and Christian men, who have devoted all their days to the furtherance of God's glory, as is shown by their present insurrection.' A 'Litanei der Deutschen' was circulated, in which divine help was asked for on behalf of these two men.

Hutten in his writings gave the impression that he was confident that the Emperor would place himself at the head of the contemplated bloody revolution; a poem addressed to Charles runs as follows:—

For what herein is done by me
Is for thy glory and thy praise,
Or else it would not fitting be
That I should thus a tumult raise.
All free Germanics I exhort
(Yet as thy subject vassals brave)
To lend me gladly their support,
And from disgrace the Empire save.
And as our leader thee alone,
Most gracious Emperor, we'll own.

In his private correspondence, on the other hand, it transpires that, after his visit to the Court of the Emperor's brother Ferdinand had proved fruitless, he had little hope left that Charles would assume the leadership of the revolutionary forces. 'I place but little hope on the Emperor,' he wrote, 'for he is surrounded by crowds of priests, some of whom especially have won his entire confidence.' And in a letter to Erasmus on November 13, 1520, he expresses the same hopelessness with regard to the Emperor, but at the same time his intention of proceeding to revolutionary measures without his help. He exhorted Erasmus most urgently to be careful of his personal safety in the coming struggle, and to take

refuge at Basle. The conflict would already have begun if Sickingen had not advised delay on account of the Emperor. 'If you too,' he writes to Luther, 'do not approve of my strong measures, you cannot, at any rate, blame my intention of setting Germany free and gaining new glory for learning. Should the undertaking not succeed, still no skill or artifice of the popish Court will be able to extinguish the fire that we shall have kindled for its destruction. That fire will burn on, even though we ourselves should be consumed in it, and from our ashes there will arise yet stronger and more valiant defenders of liberty. It is just because I am persuaded of this that I mean to attempt all, and not to let myself be deterred by any threats. Even if an imperial edict goes out against us, every place of refuge will not be closed to us, or all means of help taken from us.' The Romish tyranny was beyond all measure terrible, and could no longer, as Erasmus had thought, be stayed by gentle means; there was nothing for it but to resort to arms, and 'to cast away, to burn, to destroy the putrid corpse.' He did not stand alone in the fight, he said in a song for the people:

There's many a one
Will join the fun,
Though death should prove his master.
Brave troopers, rise,
Landsknechts likewise,
Save Hutten from disaster.

The burden of another popular song is the glory he will earn as the champion of the Gospel:

Ah, noble Hut. Franconian,
Go forward undismayed;
Anon thou shalt sing praises
To God, who gave thee aid

For justice well to fight:
Thou shalt uphold the right
With peasant and with knight,
With pious warriors good
Defend Christ's Holy Blood.

At the beginning of the year 1521 Hutten brought out a further collection of 'Gespräche' (Dialogues).

In the first of these, 'The Bull-slayer,' he repeats the call to arms. 'This is a matter which concerns us all; we are carrying on business for the profit of all. Come, all ye who wish to be free, here is something of great value for sale. Here tyrants are expelled. Here bondage is broken. Where are the lovers of freedom, who cannot all have disappeared from the land? Where are the wise and the enlightened, those men of illustrious names? Where are ye, ye leaders of nations? Why come ye not to the muster, to join with me in ridding our common Fatherland of this pest? Is there none who cannot endure to be a bondsman? Is there none who is ashamed of oppression and can wait no longer to become free? In one word, are there none left who have any manly courage and spirit? Where are all those who but lately were ready to march against the Turks? As if wild raging bulls were not far worse enemies for Germany.' 'You have heard me! I see a hundred thousand armed men, and at their head my brave friend Sickingen. The gods be thanked! Germany has come to its senses and means to be free!'

In the dialogue of 'The Robbers' he depicts four classes of thieves. The most harmless and inoffensive are the so-called street robbers; a far worse kind are the merchants, who by the introduction of foreign wares outrageously rob the German people every

year, and who ought to be driven out of the country; worse still are the lawyers, who defeat all justice and who should to be completely extirpated; but the very worst class of all are the robber-bands of profligate priests. If Germany is not freed from this last class, so Hutten makes Sickingen say in the dialogue, there is no hope for the land. He will never cease to urge on the Emperor that he must relieve the priests of their burden of riches 'for the increase of their piety;' and that he ought to have all the gold and the silver in the churches melted down, and all the jewels sold, and raise armies with the money thereby realised.

It was not by Rome only that the German people were plundered without measure and without end; the Emperor's own German prelates were just as bad, and so mighty had they grown through fraud and robbery that they had gained possession of all the fairest regions and most fruitful plains of Germany. The ill-fated tribe of the Franconians was especially in subjection to the godless rule of the priests, and had forfeited the glorious name of 'free Franconians' by accepting this yoke more servilely than any other tribe. But the day of delivery from these most pestilential robbers was at hand.

Thus we see that in these projects of emancipation it was not merely the diminution of the wealth of the church and the plunder of churches that was planned, but also the transformation of ecclesiastical principalities into secular ones—such as Sickingen, for instance, later on tried to effect in the case of the archbishopric of Treves.

As soon as the moment of deliverance had come, said Hutten, the knights of the realm must try and

persuade all the most honourable townships of Germany to put aside all old quarrels and differences and to unite in common action. 'For I see them aspiring after freedom and protesting against this scandalous bondage as no other class does. They have strength moreover, and money in abundance, so that if it comes to fighting—and in my opinion it must—they will be able to supply the necessary sinews of war.'

'All this,' says a merchant whom Hutten brings into the dialogue, 'seems to point to a war against the priests, which may Christ, the Saviour, hasten. For according to my holding there has never been a more just or more urgent cause for war.' Whereupon Hutten answers: 'It is as you say. If it has always been held necessary to fight against every kind of tyranny, what zeal must we now evince when we have to do with tyrants who not only lay hands on our property and rob us of our civil freedom, but who also undermine our faith, our religion, all we hold sacred; who suppress the truth and even endeavour to drive Christ Himself from our thoughts!'

Another Hussite whirlwind was to be let loose on German soil.

Accordingly in another dialogue, 'The Second Admonisher' ('Zweiter Warner'), Hutten introduces the Hussite leader Ziska in the character of a deliverer. He makes Sickingen say: 'And in order that you may see that it has not always fared ill with those who have been enemies of the priesthood I will mention to you one man, instead of many, the Bohemian Ziska, the invincible leader in the fiercest and longest war ever waged against sacerdotalism. In what respect does Ziska fall short of the most glorious renown of the

greatest of generals? Has he not left behind him the fame of having freed his country from tyranny, of having rid all Bohemia of those good-for-nothing wretches the lazy priests and lazier monks; of having distributed their goods among the different foundations and the community at large; of having closed the country against the attacks and robberies of the Pope; of having manfully avenged the martyrdom of the saintly John Huss; and with all this of having sought no reward, of having in no wise enriched himself?' When the 'Admonitor' objects that he has heard say that 'Ziska's deeds were full of atrocity and godlessness,' Sickingen answers that 'it is no crime to punish the guilty and to deprive haughty, avaricious, luxurious, and idle men of that of which they had taken possession unlawfully, and to drive them out of the Fatherland, where their presence in such numbers causes famine and scarcity.' 'Why,' asks Sickingen, 'should I not follow such an example?'

Hutten desired to gain the Emperor to his side, but he meant to go through with his plans even if Charles was not favourable; for he said 'There are cases in which not to obey is the truest obedience.' 'The Emperor lets himself be made use of by the worst of men for things that are of no profit.' 'If it is his destiny so promptly to follow bad counsellors, I think that speedy downfall will also be his destiny.' Surrounded as he was by a host of honourable men, the Emperor ought to deprive the Bishops of their inordinate power, abolish superstition, bring in the true religion and the light of the faith, and restore the freedom of Germany. It was not the opinions of single individuals, but the will of God, that

should be considered: truth and religion were at stake! 'If the Emperor, however,' he said, 'will not take up this cause, and no hope any longer remains that he will interest himself in the welfare of the Fatherland, I have resolved to make a venture at my own risk, be the result what it may.'

The politico-ecclesiastical revolutionary party was in great measure responsible for the state of things in Germany which is deplored by the Franciscan monk Thomas Murner, in his lament on 'The Downfall of the Christian Faith.' In this poem he says that no right-minded person can defend the existing evils and abuses of the Church, and that the Church-people themselves are partly to blame for the revolutionary movement that has broken out:

The evils they deplore
No man of honour lauds;
God will endure no more,
Methinks, these Romish frauds.
Yet herein do I grieve,
And all my heart is rent,
Our faith they will upheave:
This is my sore lament.

I must in truth say this,
We are to blame indeed;
To sell indulgences
May many a man mislead:
Who thus forgiveness buys,
And thinks 'all's even now,'
That man will lightly prize
All sacraments, I trow.

The ruling powers, he goes on to say, were sunk in indolence; discord and envy reigned among the clergy. But these evils could not be cured by a revolutionary upheaval and by the complete shattering of all existing institutions, which was what the new religious

movement must lead to. The whole fabric of Church organisation would be destroyed by the new doctrines that were being preached :

The shepherd is struck down,
And scattered are the sheep ;
The Pope's expelled ; his crown
No longer he can keep.

And scarcely now is named
The name of Christ the Lord,
Lies everywhere proclaimed
And venom rank outpoured.

The patriarchs and all
The cardinals are gone,
No bishop's in his stall—
The parson's left alone.

The people now decree,
In ignorance most dense,
Who shall their shepherd be :
Ah, woe the shame immense !

The Holy Mass is *nil*,
In life, or yet in death ;
The sacraments they will
Revile with every breath.

Five of them they've annulled,
And left us two alone,
But so to pieces pulled
They'll also soon be gone.

Of Luther's doctrine of universal priesthood he says :—

We're priests now, every one,
All women and all men,
Though Orders we have none,
Nor have anointed been.

The stool stands on the table,
The coach before the steed,
The faith is quite unstable,
And soon will fall indeed.

In some half-dozen more verses he describes the misery and discord caused throughout the Empire

by the new doctrines; he laments that the Gospel, which once filled men's hearts with joy and gladness, is now only the cause of tumult and bloodshed.

The apple is thrown down,
And discord's everywhere,
In village and in town;
No one will give a hair,
No, not a single mite:
The magistrates are spurned;
By cunning and by spite
Our hearts to gall are turned.

The Gospel was of old
A message of glad mirth,
Which heaven did unfold
To fill with peace the earth.
But now they've poisoned it
With wrath and bitterness;
The sacred Holy Writ
Brings only wretchedness.

Of God's most Holy Word
Complaint I dare not make,
But these men do pervert
The truth for slaughter's sake.
The Word of endless life,
Which Christ brought from above,
They've used for war and strife,
Instead of peace and love.

Had Turkish armies won
Each Allemanic town,
From rising of the sun
To where it goeth down,
They could not have destroyed
Our holiness as much
As we have been annoyed
By Christians yclept such.

Since Christ his time indeed,
Upon my oath I say,
There ne'er was such sore need
'Mong Christians as to-day.
The beauty of our trust
Has fallen with great might;
Our crown lies in the dust
And is bemocked outright

Agitators who entrapped the people and inculcated contempt for all authority would bring about the complete ruin of the Faith:

> Who now can best befool
> With lying words, and teach
> Contempt for law and rule,
> And insurrection preach,
> Him flock the masses round
> To hear him shout and smash
> Our faith, till on the ground
> It crumbles into ash.

In an exhaustive reply to Luther's 'Address to the German Nobility' Murner speaks out frankly concerning the abuses of the Church—annates, pallium money, commendams, reservations, and others—and will 'excuse no one for their abuses.' As for the contempt into which the Church penalty of the ban has fallen he says: 'Nobody is to blame for it but the priests and bishops, who have used or rather abused it so lightly, often inflicting it for a mere theft of two or three hazel nuts or some such paltry matter. These abuses should be put down in a constitutional manner by the ecclesiastical courts, the Emperor, and the Estates, but they should not be used, as Luther is using them, to 'injure our faith.' Luther, he said, as nobody could doubt, was only taking up the grievances of the German nation against the Court of Rome as a lever and a plausible pretext for upsetting the Christian faith, for spreading his poison over the land, and proclaiming Hussite and Lollard doctrines. Whilst endeavouring to unite Germany with the Bohemians and the Muscovites he would 'separate the country, as regards its creed, from all other Christian fellowship.' 'I hope to God that we Germans will in time have got rid of all our

grievances, and will afterwards remain pious Christians, and submissive to the laws of our Fatherland.' Whether for the removal of these grievances a council would be necessary he left to the Emperor and the Estates to decide. Luther, he said, had talked of appealing to a Council, 'but I should have thought,' he continues, addressing himself to Luther, 'that since you long so much for a Council you would have trusted to that same Council, inspired by the Holy Ghost, to make all necessary reforms and to redress all grievances. You are disregarding this right and proper course, and embarking on a fatal line of action.' Everywhere, he complains, Luther is counselling arbitrary measures; his language to the Pope is outrageous: 'I will say in truth that the meanest scullion has never been more shamefully scolded and abused than the Pope; and even if he were a murderer and the greatest villain on the earth he ought not to be treated so scandalously.' No improvement in the condition of the Church would ever be effected by such calumnious writings as Luther's.

Whilst refuting Luther's dogmatic and doctrinal assertions Murner becomes particularly fierce in the passage where he treats of the holy Mass. To Luther's assertion 'that the establishment of masses is not only of little use, but also provokes God's anger against us,' he answers: 'I must tear open my heart here in great bitterness, and speak with you briefly, but in plain German. And I will set aside all priestcraft, doctor's degrees, monkhood, monasticism, vows, oaths, promises, and what not, by which I might seem laid under obligation, and will be simply a pious Christian. Well, then, my father taught me from

my youth up to show reverence to the Mass as to a memorial of the sufferings of Christ Jesus, our Lord, and thus all are taught who learn in the holy Scriptures about our common Saviour, Christ, that the Mass is a sacrifice, profitable for the living and for the dead; all sacred teachers are of this opinion; it is our holy usage that has grown up with us since the time of the twelve Apostles. See to it now and remember, you high priests of the faith, that you teach us the truth in this matter of the Mass, for it lies at the heart's core of every Christian man. For if this should not be, and any error were found here, it may well be conjectured what might happen in other cases. See to it, and remember that here in this matter of the Mass you do not delay or spare; for you see that they do not delay or spare who are combating our reverence for the Holy Mass. But if you delay you will rue the evil.'

'This I say from my Christian heart, and my father's teaching: If all the bishops were silent as death, so that the worship of the Holy Mass became extinct, still I would testify with this my handwriting that I will die out of this world in the paternal doctrine of the worship of the Mass, and will trust for salvation to the contemplation of the cross of Christ.'

Referring to Luther's proposal that the ancient abbeys should be reserved for the younger sons of the nobility he says: 'In this the Holy Ghost does not speak through you, Luther, but you are holding out a bait to the nobility. For you say: We are all of the priestly order. If, then, we are all of the same order, why do you give privileges to the children of the nobles before all others? Do you mean to say that Christ admitted only nobles to the high dignity of the twelve

Apostles? As you pride yourself on being a truth-speaking man, this flattery does not become you. But if you cannot prove this from Holy Writ I let it stand for human speech.'

Again and again he begs and conjures the nobles to fight for and protect the ancient Christian faith. 'I will not have it denied that Dr. Luther is in the wrong and has spoken untruth in everything, but in many things he has been found not unskilful.' In this, he blames him however, 'most of all for that he has so mixed up truth with falsehood that the one cannot be separated from the other or understood by simple-minded Christians; also because by means of you the chief and the most prominent people he has abused his noble profession and his reason for seditious, separatist, and unchristian ends to lead Christ's poor lambs into unbelief.'

Luther's turbulent proceedings must inevitably lead to a 'Bundschuh'[1] (a rising of the peasants), and to frantic and senseless agitation.

Murner too, addressed himself as Luther and Hutten had done, to the newly elected Emperor Charles. He begged and implored him to stand up for the old faith. Never since its foundation, he said at the beginning of his address to Charles, had the empire been more dangerously attacked than it was now by Luther and his party. This so-called reformer, like a second Catiline, was fomenting civil war, 'as if such insurrection, innovation, and forcible revolution were in accordance with the Christian faith,' and as if

[1] So called from the device—a *Bundschuh*, or rough kind of peasant's shoe—stuck on a pole as a banner at the first peasants' rising in 1431. See for further explanation vol. iv. p. 129, English translation.

'God's command could in such wise be obeyed and no sin committed.'

'Church and State are tottering to their foundations,' wrote the prebendary Charles von Bodmann shortly before King Charles came over from Spain, 'and the eyes of the world are turned to the young emperor, who is assuming the reins of government under more difficult and distressing circumstances than any of his predecessors on the throne. How will he be able to avert the imminent danger of intestine war? What remedies will he discover for the daily and rapid spread of heresy? The nation looks to him as to its saviour in its extremest need.'

BOOK VI

CHAPTER I

THE DIET OF WORMS AND THE SENTENCE ON THE NEW GOSPEL

THE newly elected Emperor, Charles V., began his rule with the firm determination to maintain peace among Christian nations; to protect Christendom against the ever increasing danger from the Moslem arms, and if possible, by the expulsion of the Turks, to restore the supremacy of Christendom throughout the world. In his first manifesto to the Estates and subjects of the Empire, issued from Molino del Rey on October 31, 1519, four weeks before receiving the electoral capitulation, he announced his intention to start from Spain the following March, and come to Germany to be crowned Emperor and to hold a Diet. Further, he intended to nominate an 'honourable and worthy' Council of Administration, to be composed of the notables and other excellent and loyal persons of the German nation, for the maintenance of peace, justice, and order in the holy Empire. 'Moreover,' he promised in this declaration, 'we shall attend to all other matters as beseems a Roman king and chief head and protector of Christendom, so that resistance may be opposed to the infidels who now, more than ever

before, are extending their dominion and tyranny in an alarming manner, and in order that we ourselves may be worthy of the title of "Perpetual Augmenter of the Empire."' His subjects, he says in another proclamation, are to await his arrival with hopefulness and rejoicing, and with pious prayers and solemn processions, to beg of God that his journey to Germany may be prosperous, and that he may be enabled to carry into effect his laudable intentions for the welfare of all Christendom.

From the very outset the position of Charles was a most difficult one.

While the Roman Empire had fallen to his lot there was a near prospect of his losing his own hereditary dominions. A revolution was raging in Spain, and threatened to deprive him of the throne; the Castilian insurgents had offered the crown to Don Manuel, King of Portugal. Naples stood in constant fear of attack from a Turkish fleet, and the French king, Francis I., was stirring up discontent in Naples as well as in Castile. In the Austrian hereditary dominions there was no firmly established rule: the struggles for provincial independence seemed to endanger to the utmost the authority of the sovereign power. In the Empire the state of things was almost anarchical. The English ambassador, Richard Pace, remarked in the summer of 1519, while in the Rhine district, that the German nation was in such a state of discord that all the Princes of Christendom would not be able to restore the country to order. In the following spring the Cardinal von Este wrote, concerning the eastern portion of the Empire, that the country was so distracted that everyone could do as he pleased; there were many to rule, but few to obey.

The terms of the 'capitulation' laid before the new Emperor by the Electors represented an almost complete victory of the oligarchical over the monarchical principle. Added to all this the treasury of the young King was quite exhausted;[1] the crown of Germany had cost him nearly a million gold gulden[2]—an enormous sum, according to the then value of money—and the application for a loan from King Henry VIII. of England had been unsuccessful.

Thus outward circumstances all combined to dictate a policy of peace to the young King. His character and bent of mind, moreover, were also opposed to warlike and revolutionary plans. He only wished to utilise the means at his disposal for the defence of the inheritance that had fallen to him, and he thanked God that such means had been vouchsafed him.

On October 22, 1520, Charles made his entry, with great pomp and magnificence, into the coronation town of Aix-la-Chapelle. The only two Electors who were absent on the occasion were Joachim of Brandenburg and Frederick of Saxony; the latter was detained in Cologne by an attack of gout. In the retinue of the King there stood out prominently 'four hundred cuirassiers adorned with silver and gold, so that I cannot believe,' writes an eye-witness, 'there could ever be seen amongst men more beautiful or more costly apparel. But the royal apparel surpassed all other.' Charles was mounted on a horse capari-

[1] See our statements, vol. ii. (Eng. trans.), pp, 278, 279.

[2] 'A gulden, according to Köstlin (*M. L.* i. 26), was equivalent, in the first half of the sixteenth century, to from 15 to 20 marks of present German money.' (I have ventured to make use of this note from Beard's *Martin Luther*, p. 121.—TRANSLATOR.)

soned with silver, and wore a silver biretta on his head; he was of slight build and middle height; his face was pale and beardless, and 'he was so calm and serious in his behaviour that no one would have thought he was only just twenty years old.' He seemed 'to count as nothing' the highest earthly good fortune; 'he showed a dignity and greatness of character as if he had the globe of the earth beneath his feet.'

On October 23 the coronation was solemnised, and Charles took the oaths which formed the basis of the Holy Roman Empire of the German nation and the substance of its constitution. The principal article related to the protection of the Church and the Papal See. 'Wilt thou,' said the Archbishop of Cologne, according to the ancient usage, 'wilt thou hold fast the holy Catholic faith, as it has been handed down from the Apostles, and show it forth in works that are worthy of it? And wilt thou yield due and loyal submission to the Pope and the Holy Roman Church?' 'I will,' answered the Emperor, and laying two fingers of his right hand on the altar to give formal ratification to his oath, he added the words: 'In reliance on divine protection, and supported by the prayers of the whole body of Christians, I will, to the best of my power, truly perform what I have promised, so help me God and the holy evangel.'

Charles interpreted the word Empire in the full scope of its ancient mediæval acceptation as the basis and corner-stone of all human right on earth, and as the supreme headship and protectorate of the Christian Church.

His chief aim and object, he said on August 16,

1519, in a memorandum for his envoy to King Henry VIII. of England, was to use his power for the glory of God and the Apostolic See. 'The papal and imperial sovereignty' he believed to have been instituted by God as the highest authority on earth, exalted above all others. On Pope and Emperor, as the two 'real heads of Christendom, the duty was imposed of extirpating all errors among Christian peoples, of establishing universal peace, of undertaking a general crusade against the Turks, and of bringing all things into better order and condition. In war and in peace these two powers must be indissolubly bound together, and by their unanimity hold out to all true believers the assurance of a better future.'[1]

After the Emperor had taken his coronation oath the Archbishop put the following question to the Electors, the princes, and the whole assembly of people present: 'Will you submit yourselves to this Prince and Lord? Will you strengthen and defend his kingdom, build it up loyally, and be obedient to his commands according to the injunction of the apostle, who says: "Let each one be subject to the higher powers?"' Whereupon all present, the princes as well as the lowest among the assembled crowd, answered: 'Yes, we will.' The coronation oath was mutually binding; it included the whole number of the German princes, the absent ones also, according to ancient custom. That one and all of them would be ready to defend the Church and its head was all the more to be expected as up to that time in Germany the unity of the Church

[1] 'Le papat . . . et lempeyre,' says Charles in a letter to Adrian of March 7, 1522, 'doit estre une mesme chose, unanime des deux' (Lanz, *Correspondence*, i. 59).

had never yet been loosened by any division among its members. Whatever the force of the movement which the new doctrines and Luther's incendiary writings had aroused, it had as yet led to no practical results: the ancient church constitution and the old forms of worship remained everywhere unaltered; even in Wittenberg the Holy Mass was still read. There was every reason to expect that the princes and the other notables would continue in the same frame of mind as in the year 1512, when they had declared at the Diet of Cologne that 'as a Christian body and assembly they were bound to support the Emperor and were pledged towards each other to act in concert and unison for the maintenance of the faith, of the Roman Church, and of the Holy Roman Empire of the German nation, to prevent papal oppression, and to protect the unity of the Church against schismatic separatists.'

When the questions and answers at the coronation were over, the Emperor, kneeling before the altar, was anointed on the head, breast, and hands, and then led into the sacristy and arrayed in the liturgic garments of stole, dalmatica, and pluvial. The sword of Charles the Great was then girt upon him, a gold ring was placed on his finger, the sceptre and the imperial orb were handed to him, and finally the crown of Charles the Great was placed on his head by the Archbishops. He was then led back to the altar, where he repeated his solemn oath, and before the completion of the Mass he received the Holy Communion.

A few days after the coronation the Archbishop of Mayence, in the presence of Charles, read a papal brief to the effect that the Pope had chosen King Charles to be Roman Emperor on the condition that, like the late

Emperor Maximilian, he would bear the title *Roman Emperor Elect.*

From Aix-la-Chapelle Charles proceeded to Cologne, whence he convoked a Diet to be held at Worms. The assembly met on January 27, 1521, and, after a solemn service in the cathedral, was opened in the presence of a numerous gathering of notables.

On the day after the opening of the Diet the Emperor made a proclamation to the notables, informing them that, 'as a German by birth, it had seemed to him that if means were not taken to stem the existing turbulence and confusion, the Holy Roman Empire would be disintegrated. He had therefore made up his mind to do all he could for the Empire in this respect, and also for the exaltation of the Christian faith, so that the enemies of the same might be the more easily destroyed. Before everything else, therefore, it was necessary to consider how justice, peace, and order might be re-established, and a Council of Regency formed, which should govern the country during the Emperor's absence; for it was only under the rule of justice, peace, and order that all necessary and profitable business could be carried on and flourish.'

Also, in accordance with the demands of the Electors, the Emperor would, as soon as possible endeavour to go to Rome to be crowned, and at the same time he would make every effort to regain the principalities and provinces which had been wrested from the Empire. In all these matters he asked for the counsel and sympathy of the notables, but above all in the restoration of peace and justice and in the entire suppression of highway robbery, which was utterly obnoxious and intolerable to him.

In a later address Charles explained to the notables that he had accepted the crown 'not for his own profit, or for the sake of extending his dominions and enriching his purse, but out of love for the German nation and the Holy Empire, which in glory, honour, might and majesty, no monarchy in the world can compare with, but which is at present regarded as the shadow of its former self.' He hoped, 'with the help of his kingdom of Spain and his allies, to be able to restore the Holy Empire to its former honour and dignity.' This undertaking, he said, would be advantageous to him not only as secular head of Christendom, and defender and protector of the faith, the Church, and the Pope, but also to the German nation, the common good, and the maintenance of peace and order. It was his will and intention, if only the Estates would loyally help and support him, to set things right again in the Empire; he would devote his life and his fortune to this purpose, and govern justly and usefully with the help of loyal, intelligent, and pious counsels. His imperial honour and dignity were bound up with the honour and dignity of the Estates of the Empire. The latter, in their deliberations, must therefore lay this fact to heart: the dignity, majesty, reputation, and prestige of the Empire would be judged not by them only but by foreign nations also, and he and they must be careful to maintain the reputation of the Empire abroad.

The first matter to be considered was the appointment of a Council of Regency, which, according to the suggestion of the Emperor, should be empowered to act in his absence. With regard to this matter the

notables stated, on March 7, that they would submit a memorandum of advice to Charles, from which he would see that their aims and desires were directed towards the exaltation of the Empire and the Imperial prestige, and that they honoured him (Charles) as their true ruler and Emperor, and would rejoice in his glory and welfare. Nothing on earth would be dearer to them than that he should excel all other Christian potentates in splendour and prosperity.

In spite of these assurances, however, the scheme drawn up for the constitution of a *Reichsregiment* (Council of Regency [1]) seemed almost a mockery of the Imperial Majesty. The oligarchists, who thought that, with this youthful Emperor at the head of affairs, the time had come for them to get the administration into their own hands and to have their way with the other deputies, made demands which were based on the organisation of the Augsburg Council of Regency of 1500. Even during the presence of Charles in his Empire this new Council was to retain the sum and substance of authority, or, as one of the town delegates excellently expressed it, 'to relieve the Emperor of all responsibility.' But Charles was equal to them. 'They appeared to him,' he informed them in answer to their proposals, 'to have begun suddenly to think that he was too young to govern, although they had unanimously elected him, and thus testified that they considered him to be of age; it was not customary to place a guardian or regent over a person who had attained his majority. It would not become his dignity, authority, and reputation that the Council of Regency should exercise administrative power while he himself was

[1] See Dyer's *History of Modern Europe*, i. 380.—TRANSLATOR.

present in the Empire, or that the power hitherto vested by divine and human law and custom in the Imperial Majesty should be in any way curtailed.

After lengthy discussion it was finally settled that the *Reichsregiment* should only govern during the absence of the Emperor; that on his return it should only be called a Council, and that within a prescribed circuit the Emperor should have the power to summon it to himself; that in any business that had already been begun this Council should retain the chief power, but that in all matters that arose after the Emperor's return nothing should be done without his consent. During the Emperor's absence the *Reichsregiment* was to have the power and privileges of a chief central administration for all internal affairs of the Empire; it was to be the highest tribunal and the highest administrative body; and finally—and this last clause had far-reaching results in the following year—it was to exercise ecclesiastical jurisdiction, and to be empowered to proceed against any assailants of the Christian faith. The *Reichsregiment* was to consist of an Imperial vicegerent and twenty-two assessors, of whom Charles was to nominate four—two in his capacity of Emperor and two by right of his Austrian and Burgundian dominions. The Estates were to have the nomination of the remaining eighteen. The appellation 'Regents of His Imperial Majesty and the Empire,' which had been given to the Council of Regency under Maximilian, was, by Charles's wish, changed to 'His Imperial Majesty's Regency in the Empire;' and the members were no longer, as formerly, to take their oaths to the 'Emperor and Empire,' but to the Emperor alone. The seat of the *Reichsregiment*

for the next eighteen months was to be Nuremberg, and the *Kammergericht*, or Imperial Chamber, was to meet there also during this period.

This *Kammergericht*, the highest tribunal in the Empire, had of late fallen into abeyance, and the debate concerning its rehabilitation took up a great deal of time. 'The *Kammergericht*,' wrote home the Frankfort delegate, Philip Fürstenberg, on February 9, 'is like a wild animal that puzzles everybody. No one knows how to attack it: one advises this way, another that.' 'How to get the *Kammergericht* into good order and smooth working,' he writes again on February 26, 'has long been a matter of arduous labour, thought, and trouble, but in truth I have not yet heard of any "Doctor"—and there are many on the bench—who can solve the problem.' At last, with but slight modifications, the same rules and organisation that had obtained under Maximilian were adopted; but two more assessors, to be appointed by the Emperor, were added to the original number. With the full assent of the notables Charles announced an enlarged and improved scheme for the *Landsfriede*, or public peace, in which the ancient traditional alliance of the spiritual and secular powers was recognised anew by a decree to the effect that every person who remained year after year under the imperial ban—that is to say, in outlawry—would be put also under the ban of the Church.

The costs of maintenance of the *Reichsregiment* and the *Kammergericht* were estimated at 50,000 gulden. The notables had offered to undertake the raising of the necessary funds, and the question now was how this was to be managed.

But every one refused to pay up. 'We are all in

prison,' they said; 'nobody goes courting.' 'Metz borders on Lorraine, and expects every day the invasion of the French; Nuremberg has not had any peace for the last twenty years; Ulm is pauperised by fines; Cologne has a slender purse; Frankfort is reduced both in the number and the wealth of its burghers, and also by its taxes; Worms has spent more than 100,000 gulden over its feuds; Spires is being ruined by priests and taxation; greater misery and lamentation have never been known.' The counts, barons, and knights intimated by letter or by speech that 'if advantageous terms and legitimate privileges were not conceded to them, to the poor as well as to the rich, and to the rich equally with the poor, they would not give their consent to any tax whatever.' Some of the princes and prelates also, says Fürstenberg in his report, excused themselves from contributing to the costs. 'Some of them,' he says, 'declared that they got nothing from the Empire, and so they hoped not to have to pay anything. Others of the princes proposed that the money should be raised by holding back the annates, or the rents from ecclesiastical fiefs which went to Rome, or by levying a tax on the Jews, or a new imperial duty. 'A general duty might be imposed on all wares that came from England, France, or Italy. Item, on all gold, silver, copper, iron, steel, and other metals, either wrought or crude; item, on horses and other animals which were exported from German lands a duty of twenty gulden must be paid. Such a duty, they said, would not fall heavily on the poor man.' The town delegates, however, would not consent to an imperial duty. At length it was unanimously agreed that, with a few individual exceptions, every one should

contribute towards the maintenance of the *Kammergericht* and the *Reichsregiment* five times as much as he had formerly paid for the *Kammergericht.*

With regard to his foreign affairs Charles, who appeared in person at the assembly on March 21, informed the notables that 'the honour, welfare, glory, and reputation of the Empire still depended on two principal points—namely, that the Imperial Majesty should receive the imperial crown at Rome, and that restitution should be made of all that had been taken from the Empire in Italy. The Emperor on his part, he said, if only the Estates helped him according to their means, would stake life and fortune on the attempt. He offered to provide for this undertaking, at his own expense, 2,000 heavy horse, or more, and a considerable number of lighter horse; also 10,000 federal troops and 6,000 Spaniards. From the Estates he asked, for the space of one year, 20,000 cavalry and 4,000 infantry. A prompt decision was imperative, as every one knew how His Majesty's enemies were preparing for war.' For many hundred years there had been no such opportunity as now of helping the Empire to so great an extent; therefore no time must be lost. If the aid was volunteered he (Charles) would set out from Germany on a 'march of recuperation to Rome;' if it was refused he would declare himself innocent before God and the world of having been wanting in will to come to the rescue of the Holy Empire. He would then be 'compelled to provide in some other way, either in war or in peace, for the affairs and business of the Empire, as far as might be necessary to His Majesty and his hereditary kingdom, lands, and subjects. At the same time he promised 'none the less in addition not

only to establish and maintain peace, law, and order in the Holy Empire, but to do and undertake whatever else might be of service to the Holy Empire and could promote its honour and prosperity.'

With regard to the Federal States, which he had again endeavoured to bind closely to the Empire, and which he hoped would join him in his march to Rome, the Emperor had already made proposals to the notables a few weeks before. Several foreign countries, he said, were constantly at work forming leagues and treaties with these Federal States (which were after all subjects of the Empire) and inciting them to rebellion and insubordination. A special embassy ought, therefore, to be sent to them and a threefold demand made —first, that as Germans and subjects of the Empire they would promise not to ally themselves with foreign Powers against the Emperor and the Estates; secondly, that they should supply 10,000 men for the Emperor's expedition to Rome, and should assist him in recovering the dominions that had been wrested from him; finally, that 'an understanding be arrived at between the Holy Empire, its Estates and members on the one side and the Federal States on the other, in order that we may live more peacefully side by side, and that war and tumult, which arise from unfriendly neighbours, may be prevented.' If the Federals agreed to these terms, the Emperor and the Estates would protect and defend them as part and parcel of the Empire.

On May 13, the notables declared themselves ready to furnish the numbers of cavalry and infantry required of them by the Emperor for the 'expedition to Rome and the reconquest of what had been taken from

the Empire.' But they stipulated that the contingents should not be furnished till the following September twelvemonth, and then only for a term of six months, and that the aid should be contributed in men and not in money, in order that the transaction might not be turned into a financial speculation. The six months, moreover, were to be calculated from the day of departure to the day of return. Furthermore, if peace and order were not restored within the stated time nobody was to be pressed for further levies. By the establishment of a new 'Matrikel'[1] the contingents of men were apportioned amongst the notables; this 'Matrikel' remained in use till the latest period of the imperial constitution.

At the beginning of the Diet the princes had passed a resolution excluding the town delegates from the debate on the Roman campaign 'very unfairly,' so these delegates said, 'and contrary to time-honoured custom.' For if they were to yield 'love and service' with the other Estates, and to stretch their help even beyond their means, they should not in justice be excluded from the council. In consequence of these remonstrances one town representative was summoned to the committee of deliberation, in order to insure that in cases where the tax imposed had been too small it should be increased, and that it should be lightened where it was too heavy.

'God grant that some good may come out of it all,' said the Frankfort delegate on May 20, in a letter reporting on the costs of the 'Kammergericht' and

[1] See Dyer's *Modern Europe*, i. 259. 'There were two methods of assessment in Germany, the Roll or Register ('Matrikel') and the Common Penny ('der gemeine Pfennig').

the 'Reichsregiment' and the establishment of the new 'Matrikel,' 'since it is being done in the name of honour, restitution, peace, and law. But, as the matter appears to me, I much fear that nothing will come of it.

That nothing did come of the many good measures passed at the Diet of Worms must be attributed to the revolutionary movement by which Church and State were harassed.

Luther had been condemned by the papal bull as an heretical teacher, and his writings ordered to be burnt. The Pope had sent the protonotary Marino Caraccioli and Hieronymus Aleander, superintendent of the Vatican, as his Legates to Germany to see that the bull and the imperial ban were enforced.

Aleander was a man of great intellectual distinction —one of the most learned humanists of the time. He had lectured on the Greek language at Paris with conspicuous success. At his lecture on Ausonius, so a German student reported, 'there was such an immense audience (and among them the most distinguished men) that the ordinary lecture-room was not large enough, and a larger one had to be found. Sometimes Aleander had as many as 2,000 listeners, of all classes. In the year 1511 he determined to go over to Germany and there devote himself to giving instruction in the Greek language and publishing the ancient classics. There were plenty of good brains, he wrote, in France and in Italy, but in those countries people were chiefly interested—and that not without some suspicion of cupidity —in those arts and sciences, from which they might expect direct pecuniary profit. In Germany, on the other hand, men were impelled by pure love of truth

to be always attempting something new, not for personal gain, but for renown and for the common good of the nation; they improved and perfected the ancient arts, and they invented new ones.'

At that time it had been Aleander's belief that no nation was so sincerely devoted to the Church as Germany; but when he returned ten years later as Legate he found the minds of men much altered throughout a large part of the country. Formerly he himself had stood high in the esteem of German humanists, but now that he had taken up the cause of the Church against Luther and Hutten, his former friends and pupils became his bitter opponents; they called him, as he himself wrote to Rome, a traitor to learning, a court sycophant, a champion of preaching friars. 'Germany,' he wrote, 'is brimful of grammarians and poetasters, who think they can have no influence as scholars—especially in Greek—unless they break with the Catholic Church.' The professors of Roman and Canon law were also, he said, on Luther's side; the clerics, with the exception of the parochial clergy, were seriously infected; a legion of impoverished nobles under the leadership of Hutten were thirsting for the blood of the clergy and only waiting for the moment of insurrection. 'All Germany is up in arms against Rome; all the world is clamouring for a Council that shall meet on German ground; papal bulls of excommunication are laughed at; numbers of people have ceased receiving the sacrament of penance.' A revolt against the Apostolic Chair, such as without being credited the Pope had predicted five years ago, had now broken out in Germany. The disaffection towards Rome

was taking deeper and deeper root in all influential circles.

Aleander was of opinion that the burning of Luther's books, in case the latter should not be induced to recant, would be an admirable method of checking the spread of heresy; for the sentence pronounced in the bull would in this way become generally known in Germany and elsewhere; and such measures, carried out publicly by authority of the Pope and by imperial decree, would also, he thought, have a salutary effect on the laity, who had been misled by thousands of heretical sermons and pamphlets.

In the Emperor's hereditary dominions of Burgundy and the Netherlands Aleander had repeatedly executed the papal bull. In Cologne also, during the Emperor's absence, the Lutheran books had been burned outside the cathedral.

In Cologne, however, Aleander met with the first serious difficulties in the execution of the bull, difficulties which were connected with the Elector Frederic of Saxony, then at Cologne, and which were of the greatest consequence for the subsequent course of events.

Aleander and Caraccioli handed over the papal document to the Elector on November 4, 1520, and begged him, according to the instructions of the bull, to have Luther's books burned, and Luther himself put under restraint, or else sent to Rome. Frederic answered that he would give the matter his consideration, and the next day he asked advice of Erasmus, who was also at Cologne at the time.

Erasmus had already by letter pleaded in favour of Luther to the Elector; every one, he had said, who

had religion at heart, read these books with the greatest sympathy. To a Spanish bishop, on the other hand, he had said in March 1520: 'Every pious person must be on the side of the Pope; Luther stirs up tumult and rebellion, and is everlastingly publishing fresh hateful books and pamphlets.' To the Pope himself he wrote, on September 13 of the same year, that he had never read more than some ten or twelve pages of Luther's writings, and these only very hurriedly; that he should not presume to oppose his diocesan in any way, especially as he was the Vicar of Christ. Even when it had still been lawful to befriend Luther he had not, he said, taken him under protection. In his interview with the Elector, however, he openly defended Luther. To Frederic's question whether he thought that Luther had erred in his preaching and writing Erasmus smiled first and then, as Spalatin relates, gave the following answer: 'Yes, in two things: that he has attacked the Pope in his crown and the monks in their bellies.' He spoke so favourably of Luther's teaching that the electoral councillor and the Court-chaplain, Spalatin, asked him to put down some of his opinions on paper for them. In compliance with this request Erasmus wrote out the following statements amongst others:[1] 'That the whole fight against Luther sprang from hatred of the classics and from tyrannical arrogance, that the best and most evangelically minded men were not incensed by Luther's opinion, but by the Pope's Bull; Luther was quite justified in demanding that he should be tried by disinterested judges; the world was thirsting for evangelical truth, and the latter ought not to be maliciously

[1] 'Axiomata Erasmi' in Lutheri *Op. Latina*, v. 241-242.

opposed, nor should the Emperor on his accession make himself hated by hard measures. He (Erasmus) would like to see Luther's case decided not by Church authority, but by wise and unprejudiced men. From the Emperor, he was convinced, nothing was to be hoped, for he was surrounded by sophists and papists. Fearing that his written statements might fall into the hands of the Legate Aleander, Erasmus asked Spalatin to let him have them back, and the latter was fully justified in saying from his point of view: 'So fearfully ready was Erasmus to acknowledge evangelical truth.' Spalatin gave him back his written opinions, but soon afterwards they appeared in print, to the extreme annoyance of Erasmus, who, a few days after the conversation with the Elector and the episode with Spalatin, had written to a friend: 'For many reasons I have refrained from connecting myself with the Lutheran cause.'

Erasmus was worse than Luther, Aleander said; he was the real originator of the new heresies.

After his talk with Erasmus the Elector Frederic sent the following answer to the papal nuncios: 'He could not comply with their request, for Luther had lodged an appeal, and it seemed that a considerable number of people, learned and unlearned, clergy and laity, approved of this step. There was not sufficiently convincing evidence of the danger of Luther's doctrines, sermons, and books to warrant their destruction; the best plan would be to grant Luther a safe-conduct to appear before a tribunal of learned and unprejudiced judges.' Frederic accordingly interceded on Luther's behalf with the influential imperial councillors Herr von Chièvres and Count Henry of Nassau,

and, on November 28, the Emperor sent instructions to the Elector to bring Luther with him to Worms for trial, but, in the meanwhile, to forbid his publishing any more writings against the Pope and the Roman See. On December 17, however, after Luther had burnt the bull and the books of canon law, the Emperor, under the influence of Aleander, cancelled these instructions. But Luther was encouraged in his revolutionary course by Duke John Frederic of Saxony, who, on December 20, expressed his gratitude to him for having continued to preach and to write as before, in spite of the Pope's sentence.

Luther persisted unweariedly in stirring up the people against the head of Christendom. In a sermon preached at the festival of the Three Kings in 1521 he compared the Pope to King Herod, 'who with a hypocrite's heart dares to come forward and worship Christ, and means all the while to cut his throat.' The rule of the Pope and that of Christ's kingdom, he said, were as opposite to each other as fire and water, or the devil and angels. The Pope, he said in a pamphlet published on March 1 in the German language, was 'more wicked than all devils; for he damned the faith, which no devil had ever done.' 'Therefore, because I call the Pope the greatest murderer that has ever been since the beginning of the world, in that he kills souls as well as bodies, I am, God be praised, a heretic in His Holiness's papistical eyes.' At the same time he reasserted his contempt for the Councils, especially the Council of Costnitz, at which the gospel had been anathematised in the person of John Huss, and in its place the 'hellish dragon of learning' set up. Huss had done too little, and had only made a beginning of

opening up the Gospel. 'I have done five times as much,' he said, 'and yet I fear that I too am doing too little. John Huss did not deny that the Pope is supreme over all the world: he only insisted that a wicked Pope is not a member of Holy Christendom, however necessary it may be to put up with him as a tyrant. For all the members of Holy Christendom must either be holy or become holy. But if at this very day St. Peter himself were sitting in the Papal Chair I should deny that he was Pope by Divine appointment over all the other bishops. All churches are alike.' 'All papal decretals,' he said, 'were unchristian, antagonistic to Christ, written by inspiration of the Evil Spirit;' he had therefore burnt them with great delight.

His own books, on the other hand, must not be burnt or interdicted: for 'his teaching had not yet been demolished.' 'If the whole world were on the side of the Pope and his bulls,' he said in the matter of his outlawed books, in a manual of 'Instruction to Penitents,' 'the whole world would deserve to be burnt up and destroyed, as it would undeniably be condemning the Gospel and the true faith.'

In all the writings which Luther published in these last years he stood forth as a complete separatist from the Church. He rejected in its entirety the whole body of Church tradition and Church authority, and with regard to the relations of man to God he set up a new dogma, of which he said that it had been buried in oblivion since the days of the Apostles. His theories on the universal priesthood and the Christian community struck at the roots of the whole fabric of Church organisation. According to his ideas the Church ought to break with the whole of her past—

in her teaching, her sacraments, her worship, in short, in all her ordinances. Formerly there had been talk of a reform of the Church in its head and members; but Luther insisted that the Church should altogether dissolve itself—in one word, should commit suicide.[1]

And whatever he insisted on was to be accounted infallible gospel truth. There could be no question with him of compromise or reconciliation; all attempts at anything of the sort must in the nature of things be shipwrecked, as was soon proved at the Diet of Worms.

At the first general assembly of the Estates on February 13, Aleander read out a papal brief in which the Emperor was required, if he had the unity of the Church at heart, to confer the sanction of legal authority on the bull of excommunication against Luther, by issuing a general edict for its enforcement. In a speech which lasted three hours Aleander showed that Luther's teaching not only shook the Church to its foundations, but would also have the most fatal effects on society. Just as the Bohemians formerly, in the name and semblance of the Gospel, had overthrown all law and order, so Luther, with his aiders and abettors, was on the way to do now; had he not, indeed, in one of his writings openly declared that 'they ought to wash their hands in the blood of the clergy'? Some people, said Aleander, were of opinion that Luther ought to be summoned to Worms and allowed a hearing. But how could one give a hearing to a man who had declared publicly that he would not submit to be instructed by any one, not even by an angel from heaven, and that excommunication was what he wanted? Luther had appealed to a Council, but he despised

[1] See Döllinger, *The Church, and Churches*, p. 67.

Councils and maintained that the Council of Costnitz had condemned John Huss falsely. As all gentle measures hitherto employed to bring Luther back to a right mind had been fruitless, and had only driven him to fiercer resistance, there was no effectual method left but the declaration of the imperial ban, which according to the constitution of the Empire ought to follow the papal ban.

Aleander's speech made a deep impression on all present. In compliance with the Pope's brief the Emperor laid before the notables the draft of a mandate to be issued against Luther and his followers. Amongst other things it was said in this draft that Luther by his sermons and his books had most scandalously attacked the Papal Chair, the decrees of the Councils, and the faith and unity of the Church; regardless of all the lenity and forbearance shown to him, and in the semblance of a minister of religion, he was still persisting in enticing the piously disposed among the common people into new and damnable errors, and in stirring up rebellion and bloodshed against the Pope, the priests, and all in authority. As this matter touched the faith so closely, the Pope, in virtue of his office, had repeatedly summoned Luther to appear before him, and now at length, since he had not put in an appearance, and had gone on teaching and preaching to the utmost of his power against the Church and the decisions of the Council, His Holiness publicly declared him a heretic, and condemned him as such. As the highest temporal protector of Christianity, and in conformity with the dictates of his own Christian feelings, he, the Emperor, was firmly resolved to defend and safeguard with all his

might the Holy Faith, the decrees and doctrines of the Church and of his ancestors, the Pope, and the Roman See. To hear Luther further was neither necessary nor desirable. If the latter would not desist from his undertaking, and make a public recantation, he must be put under restraint; his books, under decree of the imperial ban, must not be sold or read in any part of the Empire, but must be burnt and destroyed, because they tended only to the ruin of the Christian faith, to the fostering of insurrection and bloodshed, and to the destruction of all religious and secular authority and public well-being. Luther's partisans and supporters were to be punished as state criminals.

Whilst the electors and princes were debating over the Emperor's draft they became so angry and excited that, according to Aleander, the Electors Frederic of Saxony and Joachim of Brandenburg were on the verge of a hand-to-hand fight. At last they came to the unanimous conclusion that the Emperor might of course have sent forth his mandate without consulting the notables, but that such a proceeding would have caused great offence in Germany. The notables were willing and anxious to confer with the Emperor and to assist him in any measures that would be most serviceable to the Church and the Empire, but they ventured to suggest that, 'seeing what kind of thoughts, fancies, and desires had been excited in the minds of the common people by Luther's books and preaching, it would be wise and prudent to consider well what might be the result of issuing this mandate in a harsh uncompromising manner, without having first cited Luther to appear and answer for himself. It was

their opinion that Luther ought to be conveyed to and from the Diet under sufficient escort, and that he should be questioned by a few learned and expert men, not in order to engage him in a disputation, but simply to find out from him whether or not it was his intention to stand by the writings he had published against the holy Christian faith. In case of his being ready to retract these he should then be heard further concerning other points and matters, and be dealt with accordingly; if, however, he should answer that he meant to stand by all he had written against the Christian faith and doctrines that they and their fathers had hitherto held and believed, then all the electors, princes, and other notables of the realm, in conjunction with the Roman Imperial Majesty, must, without further discussion, declare their intention of standing by the faith of their fathers and forefathers and all the articles of the Christian Creed, and helping to enforce them, and the Emperor must then give the necessary orders for having his mandate proclaimed in all parts of the Holy Empire.'

'Nevertheless the notables,' so ran the final clause, 'do humbly petition your Majesty that your Majesty would graciously weigh and consider what grievances and abuses are imposed on the Holy Empire, and are suffered in a variety of ways from the See of Rome, and that your Majesty would graciously see to it that such grievances be removed and a proper, suitable, and bearable state of things restored.'

The Emperor showed great discretion and the utmost loyalty to the Church in dealing with this memorial of the notables. He advised that Luther's attacks on the faith should not be mixed up with

grievances against the Court of Rome; he would write to the Pope himself, he said, concerning these complaints, and should hope for removal of the abuses as soon as they were brought to the notice of His Holiness; also the notables were advised that they should themselves point out to him all the grievances which the nation suffered from the Court of Rome and the priesthood, and should communicate to him their opinion and advice on the subject; he would then, in conjunction with them, deal with this separate matter. But concerning the authority of the Pope and his decretals there must be no discussion. In these questions the Emperor did not consider the Diet qualified to pronounce judgment.

With regard to allowing Luther a hearing, he said that if the latter was really to be summoned to the Diet he must only be asked whether or not he had written the books in question. If he confessed to this, and was willing to retract, the Emperor would then intercede with the Pope to have the ban annulled and Luther received back into the Church; but if he continued obstinate in his heresy he must be dealt with as a heretic.

Under the above conditions Luther was invited by the Emperor on March 6 to come to the Diet, in order to give information concerning his teaching and his books. 'You need fear no violence or molestation,' Charles assured him, 'for you have our safe-conduct.'

On the Emperor's asking the notables what ought to be done if Luther refused to come, or if, having come, he refused to recant, they answered that he must then be condemned as a public heretic, held up as such to universal opprobrium, and proceeded against

by mandates. 'God grant,' wrote Aleander, 'that Luther's presence here may result in peace and tranquillity to the Church.'

The Emperor's father confessor, Jean Glapion, an austere Franciscan monk, had some time before done all he could to induce the Elector Frederic of Saxony to restrain Luther in his revolutionary course, and to get the necessary reforms carried out in a religious spirit. He conveyed to the Elector the information that he had warned the Emperor that God would punish him and all the princes if they did not free the Church from the innumerable abuses that disgraced it; Luther, he said, had been sent by God as a scourge on account of the iniquities of mankind. From many of his writings, Glapion said, the Church might get good fruit; care must therefore be taken that his good wares were brought into harbour; but no Christian could tolerate his teaching on the universal priesthood, his denial of the authority of the Church, and other such heresies. The book on the Babylonish captivity of the Church had affected him (Glapion) most painfully; he had felt while reading it as if he was being scourged from the crown of his head to the soles of his feet. The Bible, on which alone Luther took his stand, became in his hands like a book made of soft wax, which could be squeezed and stretched to suit each individual's taste; if it was well to propagate heresy and error he himself could prove still more startling things out of the Bible than any that Luther had asserted. Glapion pointed out categorically the articles which Luther should be made to retract, so that they might be able to co-operate harmoniously with him in effecting those ecclesiastical reforms which the Emperor had so keenly

at heart. If the true reformation made shipwreck, and discontent, war, and insurrection were stirred up in Germany, the disaffected kings of France and England, and other lands as well, would rejoice over the misfortunes of the Fatherland.

This and other similar representations were made by Glapion to the Saxon Chancellor Brück; he did not succeed in procuring an interview with the Elector himself.

The papal nuncio, Aleander, recognised as clearly as did Glapion the necessity for much reform in ecclesiastical matters. He implored of the Pope that the multitude of papal reservations and dispensations might be abolished, and that the papal Court would renounce its habit of annulling the concordats concluded with the German nation, and would relieve Germany of the heavy burdens imposed; that a check might be put to the practice of benefice-hunting, and that all energy might be devoted to restoring chastity among the clergy. Duke George of Saxony, Luther's most inveterate opponent, said in the petition against Church abuses presented by him to the Diet by the Emperor's wish: 'The heaviest curse of all arises out of the scandals among the clergy; hence a general reform is urgently needed; this would best be arrived at by means of a general council.' In his 'list of grievances Duke George laid special stress on annates, dispensations, commendams, and indulgences.

'With regard to complaints of this sort,' the canonicus Karl von Bodmann wrote to Rome, 'all people in Germany are of one mind, from the Emperor down to the meanest man. The whole nation is indignant at the continually increasing oppression of

the pallium fees. These complaints are vociferously echoed at the Diet.'

A committee chosen from the notables was appointed to draw up a list of grievances against the Papal Chair, and also against the archbishops and bishops, the monastic orders, and the rest of the clergy. Amongst other things it was objected that the spiritual tribunals legislated in matters purely secular; that benefices were frequently bestowed on unsuitable persons; that the ban was often enforced in purely trivial cases, and interdicts pronounced unjustly; that pastors were too often absent from their cures; that bishops were very negligent in holding and attending the synods prescribed by the canon law; that the mendicant orders were allowed too much license in begging and in collecting food; and that the monastic Orders of St. Benedict, St. Bernhard, and the Premonstratenses, in spite of their already great possessions, went on accumulating to themselves by commerce the property of the laity, and thus became inordinately wealthy. Moreover the affluence of the priestly class in general was outrageous.

This comprehensive list of grievances came before the Imperial Council to be read. 'One sees from it,' wrote the Palatine-Neuburg ambassador, 'what influence Luther's and Hutten's writings have had on the notables, in matters even which have no connection with the Christian faith.'[1]

The Emperor, on his part, was as eager as any one in Christendom for the redress of real abuses and grievances; and as for Pope Adrian VI., who within a year from that date succeeded Leo X., all the world

[1] O. Waltz, *Der Wormser Reichstag im Jahre* 1521, p. 32.

was convinced of his ardour for reform. At no former period of German history would the prospects of genuine reform in the Church—both as to the head and as to the members—have been more favourable, if only the movement could have been carried on without violent uprooting and destruction, and with the harmonious co-operation of the chief spiritual and secular powers. There might then have been some chance of preserving the allegiance of the Fatherland to the Church of its fathers, cleansed and purified and re-established on a sound and lasting basis.

But already at the Diet of Worms things wore a bellicose and revolutionary aspect. In the town itself anarchy was rampant. 'Scarcely a night passes,' wrote thence Dietrich Butzbach on March 7, 'that two or three people are not murdered. The Emperor has a provost who has drowned, hanged, and murdered over a hundred people.' 'The fasts are no longer observed. They stab one another; they commit fornication; they eat flesh, fowls, pigeons, eggs, cheese (in Lent) and carry on their revels as if they were in Mistress Venus's palace.' 'Know also that there are many gentlemen and foreign folk here who have drunk themselves to death with strong wine.'

After his speech on February 13, Aleander's life was not safe in the place; he could not show himself in the streets without being hooted by the mob and threatened with death. Luther was glorified by the people as a new Moses, a second Paul. He was a greater Church Father than Augustine, so one of his followers declared in the public market-place before an assembled multitude; Augustine had been a sinner, capable of erring, and he had erred; but Luther was

without sin and had never erred. The pictures of the reformer, which had already come into vogue, with the saint's halo, or the Holy Ghost hovering over him in the shape of a dove, were offered publicly for sale, as also the representations of Luther and Hutten together as just combatants for Christian freedom. The Lutherans erected a printing press at Worms, which confined itself to the issue of writings hostile to the Church; Hutten's missives, and innumerable pamphlets, full of scorn and raillery against Luther's opponents, flew from hand to hand. From his pen came the grossest menaces against the papal legates, whom he represented as the fiercest of robbers and the most heinous of impostors. 'I shall use the utmost diligence,' he wrote to Aleander. 'I shall put forth all the zeal I am capable of, I shall spare no exertions, I shall risk all hazards so that you may be carried away a lifeless corpse, you, who came among us bent on fury, vengeance, crime, and injustice.' He hurled the most offensive slanders at the ecclesiastical princes and higher Church dignitaries who were present at the Diet. 'Begone from the pure stream, you unclean swine! Off with you out of the sanctuary, you godless traders! Do you not see that the winds of liberty are beginning to stir, that the people, disgusted with present conditions, are seeking to establish new ones? I mean to goad, spur, agitate, and storm for freedom. None with the least spark of valour in them can any longer refrain from breaking out in fierce onslaught against you, and taking your life.' He even directed his threats at the Emperor. 'Our hope had been,' he said in a missive to the latter, 'that you would have lifted the Roman yoke from off

our necks and have put an end to papal supremacy. The gods grant that this beginning of yours may be followed by something better!' But if the Emperor himself consented to the degradation of Germany there were other German men who, even at the risk of offending His Imperial Majesty, would bestir themselves to action.[1]

Excitement of the wildest description seized all minds. It was everywhere murmured that a portentous blow was about to be struck at the clergy, and that the knights would seize all Church property. Aleander's reports show that there was daily fear that the city would be attacked by the revolutionary party and a mine sprung on the Diet—a danger all the more to be apprehended as the Emperor was without an armed escort.

'Sickingen, truly, is king in Germany,' writes Aleander, 'for he can command followers when and where he will.' 'The Emperor is unarmed.' 'The princes are passive; the prelates quake and tremble and let themselves be swallowed up like rabbits; Sickingen is, indeed, under present circumstances, the terror of Germany, before whom all others pale.'

In such circumstances the arrival of Luther was awaited at Worms.

Luther had started from Wittenberg on April 2. Four days later he was received at Erfurt as a triumphant hero by the whole band of humanists, who were entirely favourable to him. 'Exult, rejoice, thou

[1] See Böcking, ii. 38-46; Strauss, ii. 178-180. The English ambassador Tunstall reports from Worms to King Henry VIII. that Luther had promised the Emperor, if he would march to Rome against the Pope, to bring 100,000 men into the field (Fiddes's *Life of Wolsey*, 2nd edit. p. 231; see also Waltz, p. 32).

glorious Erfurt,' exclaimed Eobanus Hessus in rapturous strain at the news of his advent, 'for, lo! he comes who shall deliver thee from the ignominy under which thou hast too long groaned. He, first, has dared with iron spade to root up the poisonous weeds that have overgrown the acres of Christ.' Eobanus goes on to picture the river Gera coming forward to do homage to the expected hero, who will 'bear down all before him, were it the whole vast universe.' Crotus Rubianus, then Rector of the University of Erfurt, at the head of forty members of the university and followed by a large crowd of the townspeople, went three miles beyond the city gates, to receive the 'hero of the evangel,' and addressed him as 'the judge of wickedness,' adding that for himself and his friends to be allowed to gaze on his features was almost like a divine revelation.

On the following day Luther preached in the Augustinian church to a great crowd of people. 'The Athenians were not filled with such astonishment,' exclaimed Eobanus, 'at the speech of Demosthenes, nor Rome when she sat at the feet of her great orator, nor did Paul stir the hearts of his listeners as Luther's sermon moved the populace on the banks of the Gera.' 'One man builds churches,' said Luther in his sermon, 'another makes pilgrimages to the shrine of St. James or St. Peter, a third fasts and prays, wears the monk's cowl, goes barefoot . . . . all such works are nothing and must be done away with. Note well these words: "All our works have no power. I am your righteousness, says the Lord Christ; I have destroyed the sins with which you are loaded; believe, therefore, that it is I who have done this, and you will be justified."

What does this mean? That if we commit a fresh sin we need not at once despair, but say: "O God, thou livest still; Christ, my Lord, is the destroyer of sin:" and the sin is at once taken away. Thus we care nothing for the laws of men, not even if the Pope should come down upon us with his ban, for we are reconciled to God, so that calamities, bans, laws are as nothing to us.' Luther fired invectives against the intolerable yoke of papacy and against the ecclesiastics who 'tended their sheep much as butchers do on Easter eve.' 'There are at least three thousand pastors,' he said, 'amongst whom not four good ones are to be found.'

In the course of his sermon, according to the report of his admirers, he performed a miracle. When suddenly a noise was heard in the overcrowded church, and all became bustle and confusion, Luther said: 'Be still, dear people; it is the Devil, who is getting up a sham fight. Be still, there is nothing to fear.' 'And he exorcised the Devil,' says a chronicler, 'and all became quite quiet.' 'This is the first miracle that Luther did,' adds another chronicler, 'and his disciples believed on him and worshipped him.'

It was no wonder that Luther's vehement preaching fanned to a fierce flame the animosity that had already so long smouldered against the Church and the clergy. Luther himself was far from wishing that the seed he sowed should grow to a firebrand, but none the less it was bound to do so.

The very day after his departure riots broke out in Erfurt. Students assembled in a threatening attitude before the house of Doliator, deacon of the Church of St. Severus. The latter had expelled the prebendary

John Draco from the choir for having taken part in the welcome given to Luther, and had thus merited punishment. Threatening letters were sent to him at his house and notices to the same effect posted on the church doors. Doliator was so much alarmed that he received Draco back into the choir. These proceedings were only the prelude to the tumultuous uproar of the so-called 'Pfaffensturm' (priest riot) in June of the same year.[1]

On April 16 Luther arrived at Worms, with his escort, among whom was the humanist Justus Jonas. He was firmly resolved, he said, 'to defy all the gates of hell and the principalities of the air.' 'Say a Pater Noster for our Lord Christ,' he had said on the journey to the principal of the cloister of Reinhardsbrunn, 'to ask His Father to be gracious to Him.' If God maintains Christ's cause mine also is won.' To Spalatin he wrote: 'It is our intention to defy and terrify Satan.'

But on his first appearance before the Emperor and the Council on April 17 Luther was by no means in a confident state of mind. To the question addressed to him whether he owned to these books he gave an affirmative answer; but on the next question, whether he would retract them all, he asked for time to consider. 'He spoke in such a low voice that even those close to him could scarcely hear him,' reported the Frankfurt delegate, Philip Fürstenberg, 'and as if he was paralysed with fear.' The Emperor and the notables answered that although he might have known from the tenor of the citation what he had been summoned for, and therefore was not entitled to delay for

[1] See more detailed account at p. 246 and following.

further consideration; the Emperor, of his innate clemency, would grant him a respite till the following day.

On the day of the first hearing Hutten wrote to Luther from the Castle of Ebernburg as 'the unconquerable evangelist, the saintly friend,' and encouraged him to steadfastness. 'Keep a good heart and be strong; you see how greatly the course of events depends on yourself. If you remain true to yourself I will stand by you to the last breath. For myself I shall hazard and hope for the utmost; it is time that the Lord should cleanse his vineyard.' 'Would that I could go to Worms,' Hutten wrote at the same time to Justus Jonas, 'and raise up a storm and an insurrection!'

On April 19 the Emperor sent to the notables a document which he had composed himself and written out in his own hand in French,[1] and which was to the effect that he intended, after the example of his forefathers, to adhere loyally to the Christian faith and the Roman Church, and to believe in the holy Fathers, who had been gathered together in Council from all Christendom, rather than in one solitary monk; that he regretted having so long abetted this man and not having allowed him to be proceeded against in earnest; and that without a moment's delay Luther must depart from Worms. 'We will hold, nevertheless, to the safe-conduct we have granted him,' the Emperor said in conclusion; 'he shall return unmolested to the place he came from; but we forbid his preaching any more and misleading

[1] Wrede has inserted the original text of the Imperial Declaration of April 19 (taken from the Public Record Office, London) in the *Reichstagsacten*.

the people with his heretical teaching, and incitements to sedition.'

The night after this document was sent out to the Estates the following words were placarded upon several of the town gates: 'Woe to the land whose king is a child!' Outside the Council House a notice was posted up which ran as follows: 'After we have conferred together and sworn not to forsake the righteous Luther, we, numbering four hundred allied knights, proclaim to the simple understandings of Romanist princes and lords, especially the Bishop of Mayence, our inveterate enmity, because honour and divine justice have been trodden down by them; we do not further indicate names or describe all the tyranny of the priests over their flocks. We are ill at writing, but we mean grievous injury; with 8,000 men will we fight.' The threat ended with the dreaded watchword of insurgent peasants, thrice repeated, 'Bundschuh! Bundschuh! Bundschuh!'

Alarmed by repeated threats of this sort, the Estates begged that the Emperor would not so abruptly break off relations with Luther; they dreaded an insurrection in the Empire if action against him was taken thus hastily without further examination. They therefore submitted to the Emperor that he would do well to let some of them endeavour to persuade Luther to retract the articles condemned by the Apostolic See.

Hutten, whom Luther had kept informed of the proceedings, could not divest himself of the fear that the reformer would give in. 'Unconquerable evangelist,' he wrote to him on April 20, 'I see that we need bows and arrows, swords and muskets, to stop the fury of those devils. Do not waver, beloved Father, do

not let thyself be shaken. Let them scream, clamour, rage. Stand up fearlessly against these monsters. You shall not lack defenders, avengers. The prudence of friends, who fear my risking too much, compels me to keep quiet, otherwise I should long ago have raised a tumult under the walls of Worms; very soon, however, I shall break loose. And when I have done so you will see that I too, in my fashion, will not betray the spirit that God has awakened in me. We have Franz von Sickingen as an ardent partisan.'

'You have to thank the German nobility,' said Thomas Münzer in a pamphlet against Luther, 'whose mouths you buttered and fed with honey, for having been allowed to appear before the Imperial Council at Worms. Fine visions they had of the windfalls of abbeys and cloisters your preaching would cast at their feet. If you had wavered at Worms you would first have been stabbed by the nobles and then sent about your business: it's patent to every one.'

A committee, consisting equally of ecclesiastical and secular members, with Richard von Greiffenklau, Archbishop of Treves, as president, tried all gentle means in dealing with Luther. The Augsburg delegate, Conrad Peutinger, and the Baden chancellor, Hieronymus Vehus, repeatedly begged him to commit his case to the hands of the Emperor and the Estates for final settlement.

Luther rejected this proposal, informing its authors of the suspicions he entertained of His Imperial Majesty personally and of many of the princes. He listened with perfect indifference to the statement of Vehus that turbulence and insubordination had been aroused

by his writings, those especially on Christian freedom, which, as Vehus said, most people would interpret as giving them licence to live just as they pleased.

Luther also rejected the proposal 'that he should submit to the decision of a committee of German prelates, chosen on behalf of His Papal Holiness, who should consider his case in conjunction with the Emperor.'

Finally Peutinger proposed to him that the decision should be postponed till the next Council. Luther answered that he would agree to this on condition that at the Council 'no judgment should be pronounced against, or detrimental to, the divine words, the Epistles of St. Paul, and the truth.' In vain they tried to convince him that this was an inadmissible subterfuge, for he might say in every case that the judgment pronounced was contrary to the divine writings. Equally in vain also did John Cochlaeus, assistant theological councillor of the Archbishop of Treves, propose a public disputation: he would listen to no remonstrance. When Cochlaeus asked him if he had had a divine revelation, seeing that he thus set himself up in opposition to the whole Church and the Councils, Luther answered, after a little hesitation: 'It has been revealed to me.' He declared that he would not desist from preaching and writing.

Christopher von Schwarzenberg wrote on April 25 to Duke Louis of Bavaria that the Archbishop of Treves had informed him that 'Luther had communicated something to him in strictest confidence, which was not to be repeated to any one.'

This probably referred to Luther's intimation concerning the revolutionary body of knights who were backing him up.

When all attempts to come to an understanding with Luther had failed, the Emperor caused him to be informed that he must leave Worms without further delay; he still had twenty-one days of safe-conduct left, but he must on no account preach, or issue any pamphlets on the journey.

Luther wrote to tell Hutten of this final decision and he started from Worms on April 26. Two days later he sent a missive from Friedberg to the Emperor and another to the Estates, which last immediately appeared in print; on the title-page Luther was depicted with the halo and with the Holy Ghost in form of a dove over his head. A memorial medal was struck with the inscription: 'Doctor Martin Luther. Blessed be the womb that bare thee!' [1]

'I am going to be shut up and hidden away,' wrote Luther to Lucas Cranach, the painter, 'though where I don't yet know myself, I must endure and be silent for a little while. "A little while and ye shall not see me, and again a little while and ye shall see me," said Christ the Lord. I hope it will be the same with me.'

On the evening before his departure the Elector Frederic had told him in the presence of Spalatin and others that he was going to be put under restraint, but that he was not to know where the place of confinement would be, and that he (Frederic) did not wish to know it either, so that in case of need he might be able to swear to ignorance. Luther was conveyed to the Wartburg. His followers, however, in order to incense the people, spread everywhere the rumour that

[1] Another memorial coin bore Luther's likeness, with the inscription:
'Heresibus si dignus erit Lutherus in ullis,
Et Christus dignus crimine hujus erit.'

the Emperor's safe-conduct had been violated; that Luther had been taken prisoner, handcuffed, and cruelly treated. It was even asserted that his corpse had been seen lying in a mine.

Whilst the outbreak of a bloody insurrection was momentarily apprehended at Worms, the Lutheran case was brought to a conclusion at the Diet. On April 30 the Emperor once more solicited the advice of the notables as to the best method of proceeding against Luther, his writings, and his supporters, whether by proscription and outlawry or by some other penalty.

The notables, who had already before advised the Emperor, in case of Luther's refusing to retract, to protect the Catholic faith by issuing the necessary and customary edict against him, now insisted that this edict should be made out. The Elector Frederic of Saxony wrote on May 4, 1521, that not only Annas and Caiaphas were against Luther, but also Pilate and Herod—that is to say, not only the ecclesiastical princes but also the secular ones. Frederick himself withdrew from the proceedings and left Worms. The edict, which Aleander was commissioned by the Emperor to draw up, was ready by May 8, but was not proclaimed till the expiration of the term granted to Luther in the safe-conduct. It imposed outlawry and excommunication on Luther and all his partisans and patrons, and ordered his books to be destroyed by fire. Luther appeared to the Emperor as a man 'possessed.' By his writings, said the edict, he was disseminating noxious poison. He had violated the number, the institution, and the use of the sacraments, and degraded the sacred and unimpeachable law of marriage; he had belaboured the Pope with

scandalous and libellous language; he was treating the priesthood with contempt and inciting the laity to wash their hands in the blood of the clergy. He went about teaching the non-freedom of the human will, and encouraging a mode of life altogether unrestrained by law; indeed, he had not scrupled himself to pull down all the most hallowed restraints and barriers by publicly burning the books of the canon law. He spurned Councils, and in particular he had called the Council of Constance, which, to its eternal honour, had restored peace and unity to Germany, a synagogue of the Devil's, and those who had taken part in it he had denounced as Antichrists and murderers. 'Even as the wicked fiend in the garb of a monk he united in himself old and new heresies, and wore the semblance of a preacher of the faith in order that he might destroy the true and right belief, and in the name and similitude of evangelical doctrine might trample under foot evangelical peace and love and public order.' Besides Luther's books, all his miscellaneous publications, which had been issued in such quantities to the prejudice of the Christian folk, must also be destroyed; all his libellous pamphlets, and also his pasquils and caricatures of the Pope. And in order that in future the Christian community should be preserved from the pest of corrupt books and the noble art of printing be used only for good and laudable purposes all books and writings whatever, in which there was the slightest allusion to the Catholic faith, should be submitted before being printed to the approval of the ordinary of the place and to the theological faculty of the nearest university.

Round Worms, meanwhile, troops of several hundred

knights had gathered together; it was reputed that Sickingen had announced that he would make an end of the Diet. 'We have Franz on our side,' wrote Hutten on May 1, 1521, to Wilibald Pirkheimer, 'and he is not merely favourably disposed, but red-hot and burning. He is so to say, completely saturated with Luther; he has his books read to him at meals, and I have heard him swear that in spite of all dangers he will not forsake the cause of truth. You must positively take these words as a divine voice, so great is his devotion and constancy. It would be well also if you were to sound his praises amongst your own people: there is no grander character in all Germany.' Hutten's friends and confederates, the humanists Eobanus Hessus and Hermann van dem Busche, urged immediate action. 'There had been enough of words and talk,' wrote the former to Hutten; 'he wished now to take arms against the hereditary foe, the worst and most veritable Turks they had yet had to fight. He would not be alone in this battle; from all corners of the Fatherland combatants would hasten to his standard; he and Sickingen would be the lightning strokes that would shatter the Roman pestilence.' They must not wait, urged Hermann van dem Busche on May 5, till the Emperor had left Worms, but rush at once to arms. If Hutten allowed the papal nuncios, Luther's and Germany's worst enemies, to escape from Germany with sound limbs, and disappointed the expectations here, it would be a bad blot on his fame. 'We read in the Book of Joshua,' wrote Luther on June 1 from the Wartburg to Sickingen, 'his particular lord and patron,' 'that when God led the people of Israel into the promised land, and they slew all the people there, that is thirty-one

kings with all their cities, not one of the cities was so poor-spirited as to sue for peace, excepting Gideon only . . . but that all in their stubbornness fought against Israel. Thus it was ordained by God that as they fought stubbornly and defiantly against Israel they were ruined thereby and no mercy was shown to them. This history seems to me to be meant as an example to our popes, bishops, learned men, and other spiritual tyrants. But although their manœuvres have been disclosed they have thought neither of submission nor of peace. 'They endeavour to extinguish the light by force, and they persist in their delusions, imagining themselves so firmly seated that no one can move them, and I expect it will be ordained by God that in their obstinacy they will neither think of humility, nor treat for peace, so that at last they may be overthrown without mercy.' 'I can do nothing more; I am put aside on the shelf; but they have time now to alter what can no longer be endured from them, nor will be endured. If they do not alter it all, some one else, whom they will not thank, will do it for them, not, like Luther, with letters and words, but with deeds.'

Sickingen, however, would not come forward actively. He refused to co-operate with the revolutionary party, and found it more profitable to lend an arm to the Emperor, who had just laid Luther under the imperial ban: he hired himself out to Charles for a campaign against Robert von der Mark, who had invaded the Emperor's hereditary dominions, and against King Francis I. of France, who encouraged and protected Robert.

The confederates were hesitating and trembling,

said Hutten in his answer to Eobanus' letter; but he himself would persevere till death, would risk everything, would take up arms, and as before he had supported Luther in the spirit so now he would help him with his fists. It was not his fault that the papal nuncios had escaped with whole skins; he had left nothing undone; he had waylaid them in the streets, he had set ambuscades, but the Emperor's men-at-arms had protected them.

After the proceedings of the Worms Diet it had become clear that the object aimed at by Luther and his adherents was nothing less than a complete subversion of the whole edifice of Church organisation and of all social order. Hence all those who did not wish for such revolutionary measures fell away from Luther; former panegyrists became dumb; many even went over resolutely to the side of the Church. Before May was out Erasmus began to regret much of what he had written, and now began to utter warning prophecies against appropriation of Church property, tumult, war, and the decay of liberal culture. Mutian, who had begun by greeting Luther as the 'morning star of Wittenberg,' soon saw in him nothing but an unholy devastator, and complained of the insolence and benightedness of this innovator, 'who had all the fury of a maniac.' Crotus Rubianus came to recognise, in the summer of 1521, that it was a crime to attack the Church, 'our Queen and Holy Mother, who had given us such good laws.'

But this change of attitude was most marked in the case of a man who was one of Germany's greatest ornaments—the learned jurisprudent Ulrich Zasius. He, too, had originally hoped for an improvement in

the condition of Church matters through Luther's action, and shortly before the Leipzig disputation he had given utterance to the wish, 'May our Luther depart thither under favourable auspices!' But after Luther had denied the divine appointment of the Pope and the infallibility of the Councils, Zasius had gradually broken with him, and ever since the Diet of Worms he had become more and more unreserved in his condemnation of the revolutionary trend of affairs. He lamented that Melanchthon was prostituting his noble intellect to the defence of Lutheran error. To his former pupil Thomas Blarer, who had taken up Luther's opinions, he wrote on December 21, 1521: 'You pity me, and I pity you from the bottom of my heart, you, a stripling, ignorant of the world, who have forsaken the Church to follow after shadows. Is it right to upset the whole Church on account of the abuses of some of its members? You are reasoning from the exception to the rule, and because of the wicked you are condemning the good and throwing everything into confusion.' The dishonouring of the Mass filled him with particular sadness. He thought of writing a pamphlet on the subject, and remarked that it would be quite becoming in him to do so, because 'you grammarians, and poets, and young people of all sorts presume to meddle with the deep mysteries of theology.' 'You reject good works,' he went on, 'although some one has said: "Your works shall follow you."' 'You insist on evangelical freedom, but you do not show how it is to be reached. What have you in view, unhappy young men, that you let yourselves be misled by unwise Doctors? You say

that you have learnt the Gospel at the fountain-head, from Christ himself, not from the Fathers of the Church. Who disputes that? I also have gone to the fountain-head, but in cases of obscure and doubtful passages in the Gospel, I follow the exposition of Hieronymus, Augustine, Chrysostom—not yours. What unheard-of audacity it is for one solitary individual to set up his interpretation above that of the Fathers, of the Church itself, of the whole of Christendom! What justification can you show for such presumption? But I know what you will answer: the Spirit guides and leads you! The Spirit! Answer me, my Thomas, what spirit? Oh, how much could I say on this point! Is it the Spirit that teaches you to slander and revile so scandalously? I have read in the Epistle of St. James that wisdom is peaceable and sober. But your watchword is, "Not peace but a sword;" for it was thus that Luther answered the princes, pressing the Bible meaning with intolerable audacity, for it was in any sense but that that our Saviour spoke those words. I have learnt from Christ that the sword must be put back in its sheath, and that whosoever fighteth with the sword shall perish by the sword.' Perhaps he was thinking of Luther. 'Under the cloak of the Gospel,' prophesied Zasius, 'the unbridled populace would break out in every possible form of infamy.'

'I was for a long time favourably disposed to Luther's proceedings,' wrote the prebendary Carl von Bodmann, in much the same spirit as Zasius, 'not because I wished for a separation from the teaching of the Church, or thought new dogmas and new forms of divine worship either necessary or desirable, but because

I believed, like so many other learned men, that Luther was aiming at, and would bring about, a wholesome reform of ecclesiastical life. But the sight of all that is going on around us convinces us, only too plainly, that we have been bitterly deceived. How would it be possible to reform any institution if one began by a wholesale destruction of its organisation, with all its century-old traditions and practices, and by proclaiming the whole structure to be throughout pernicious and corrupt? Worldliness and luxury, greed of gold and enjoyment, contempt of law, hatred and envy, and all other ignoble passions, by whatever name we may call them, are deeply rooted in all classes; they spring up, as fruits of our fallen nature, in our age, as in all other ages, and all the more abundantly in our age in proportion as in this or that land, in this or that city, an evil example is set to the lower orders of the people by the rich and the noble, by ecclesiastical and secular personages of the highest standing. But how, I ask, can rich or poor be improved by removing all curbs and checks on their evil passions and all Church discipline and by being taught to despise and ridicule the chastisements of the Church, its fasting and confession, as hurtful institutions? Will the greed for gold and for the good things of this life be suppressed by holding out wealthy Church endowments as baits to the mighty ones of the earth? 'Will the sanctity of family life be secured and shielded by the proclamation of marriage principles which make every earnest Christian blush? The religion of the people is essentially bound up with the Church and its teaching, and with the loss of these all secular authority will lose its support. Luther's

character has great and noble features, but his presumption has brought about his downfall. I wish I could read in Luther's own soul how he judges his work and its results, and how he judges the enterprises of which he has been made the tool.'

What sort of judgment Luther passed on himself and his work we learn in detail from his private conversations and letters.

His anxieties, doubts, and agonies of conscience with regard to the movement he had set on foot began already to torment him during his confinement in the Wartburg.[1] To have attempted to reconstitute all the spiritual and secular organisation of society in opposition to the opinion of mankind, and to have encouraged others in such a proceeding, began to seem to him 'a really tremendous business.' 'Oh, with how far greater pains and labour, and with diligent study, too, of the Holy Scriptures,' he wrote on November 25 to the Augustinians at Wittenberg, 'have I yet scarcely attained to setting my own conscience right, that I, all by myself, should have dared to rise up against the Pope, to denounce him as Antichrist, the bishops as the apostles of Antichrist, and the universities as his brothels!'

'How often has my heart misgiven me, reproached me, and twitted me with the argument: "Art thou the only wise one? Are all others mistaken, and have they been mistaken so long? What if thou thyself shouldst be in error, and all those whom thou art misleading

[1] Concerning Luther's melancholy condition of mind during his sojourn in the Wartburg see his own letters; De Wette, ii. 2, 10, 16, 17, 22, 33; Enders, iii. 189.

should be destined to eternal damnation?"' Spiritual tortures of this sort, however, he believed were now at an end, for Christ had established and confirmed him with his one sure word, so that his heart no longer misgave him, but withstood these arguments of the papists as a stone wall the waves, and mocked at their storming and threatening.[1]

But Luther was mistaken.

The torments returned again and again, almost unceasingly, and even in his old age he still heard the same inward voice, which he regarded as the voice of the Devil, asking him who had called him to preach the Gospel after a fashion in which through all the centuries no bishop or holy man had ever understood it? 'What if after all God has no pleasure in you, and you are held answerable for all the souls you have thus misled?'[2] 'No one can imagine,' he said, 'what a bitter trial this is, and how these thoughts go on hammering at one's head.'

[1] De Wette, ii. 107.

[2] *Collected Works*, lix. 296 and lx. 6, 45. Luther's fights with the Devil, whom he believed he had seen in all manner of shapes, are well known. 'The Devil,' he said in a *Hauspostille*, 'sometimes disguises himself as a sow, a flaming wisp of straw, and so forth, as I have seen with my own eyes.' At the Wartburg, so he told a friend, the Devil had twice appeared to him in the form of a dog to destroy him (Myconius, *Hist. Reform.* p. 42). In his garden he saw the Devil in the shape of a black wild sow; at Coburg, in that of a star (Mathesius, *Historien*, p. 184). He held remarkable opinions about the Devil's sojournings on earth, and on the Devil as a murderer of mankind. Extraordinary stories illustrating these are told in Lauterbach's *Tagebuch* (Diary), pp. 109, 129, 143, 156. See also our own statements at vol. vi. (1st to 12th ed.) pp. 464–469, (13th to 14th ed.) pp. 482–487. Of the Margrave Joachim von Brandenburg he believed that 'he had made a compact with Satan, he and his father' ('habuit foedus cum Sathana, ipse et pater ejus') (Lauterbach, p. 105). He was firmly convinced of the connection between the Devil and witches, and declared himself ready to burn all the witches with his own hand (*ibid.* p. 121).

'For instance, when one sees that so many excellent, intelligent, and learned people—indeed, the best and largest part of the world—besides so many saintly people, such as Ambrosius, Hieronymus, and Augustine, have held and taught such and such doctrines.' 'And then that terrible murder cry which they yell out, "The Church! the Church!" that sickens me more than anything. For indeed it is a hard matter to conquer one's own heart and to break with all the people who are so highly esteemed and bear so holy a reputation; aye, with the Church itself, and no longer to trust and believe its teaching.' His conscience reproached him with having erred in thus disturbing the former condition of the Church, which had been so peaceful and tranquil under the Papacy, and for having caused much scandal, discord, and sedition by his doctrines; 'and I cannot deny,' he adds, 'that I am often anxious and uneasy on that score.' But in all these heart-searchings he endeavoured to comfort himself with the thought that he was preaching the 'one Christ' who alone could not err, whereas the Christian Church could err and had erred; his teaching was the pure unadulterated Gospel, which no one should hinder, or could hinder. This doctrine must be preached even though everything else in the world should be destroyed. 'It is very terrible,' he said, 'but there is no way out of it. It is short and simple: If any one will not believe he shall be damned; for thus speaks the Lord Christ, who has sent me, and from whom I have received the words, who also has called me to preach and who does not lie. But now they say: "If the Pope falls, Germany will go to ruin, the country will be shipwrecked." How can I help it? I cannot prevent it. Whose fault is it? 'Oh,

oh! you say, if this Luther had not come with his preaching, the Pontificate would still be standing on firm legs, and there would be peace. I cannot help it.' He did not shrink from comparing the condition of Christendom, before the proclamation of his gospel, with that of heathendom at the time of the Apostles. 'In Rome also they said at that time: "If St. Peter and St. Paul come into this town, all will go to ruin; formerly when we worshipped idols all went well with us." This same cry goes forth now when people say: "If the Gospel had not been preached, things would never have come to this pass, but all would have remained peaceful." No, my friends, things will be still better, for Christ says: "I have many more things to say and to do," which means that you must let this preaching have its way, or you will not have one stick left unto you, and there shall not remain one stone upon another.'

Such was the confident language in which he spoke in his sermons and in all his writings. But in his private confessions and in conversation with his friends his words had quite another ring. 'It is a mystery to me,' he laments after having preached his new gospel for more than twenty years, 'that I cannot trust in this doctrine; in this I am an enemy to myself, for all my disciples fancy they have it pat at their fingers' ends.' 'Antonius Musa, pastor at Rochlitz,' writes Luther's eulogist Mathesius, 'told me that he had once bitterly lamented to the Doctor that he could not himself believe what he preached to others. "God be praised," the Doctor had answered, "that other people feel that also; I thought it was peculiar to myself."' In order to comfort himself in his uncertainty Luther tried to persuade himself that St. Paul also had not been able to

believe firmly, and that this was the thorn in the flesh of which he speaks. The Apostle's words, 'I die daily,' he took to mean that he had doubted his own teaching. 'I cannot indeed believe in this gospel as strongly as I can preach, talk, and write about it, and as other people think that I believe.'

His spiritual conflicts, his despondency and hopeless despair are often described by himself with a pathos that excites the profoundest pity. He says that in the agony of these temptations to doubt he became so physically prostrated and exhausted that he could scarcely gasp for breath, and that no one could console him; and he used to say to himself, 'Am I the only one who must always be so sad of heart, and so sorely assailed? Oh, I saw fearful faces and spectres mocking me and spitting at me. I have often wondered at such times whether I had the least scrap of heart left in my body.' 'I am often angry with myself,' he confesses in another place, 'because when thus assailed I cannot drive out my thoughts by the grace of Christ, nor in any degree shake them off, in spite of all I have read, written, and preached.' And again: 'If any one else had had to suffer the trials and temptations that I have experienced, he would long since have been dead. I have had no greater or heavier ones than the thought: "It is you who have raised up all this tumult!" In these times of temptation I have often seemed to go down into hell, till God brought me out again and comforted me.'

When a preacher once related how the Devil had tempted him to stab himself with a knife, Luther replied: 'It has often happened to me that when I have taken a knife in my hand wicked thoughts have

instantly come into my head, and that often I have been unable to pray, and the Devil has driven me out of the room.'

'One may almost exclaim with Job and Jeremiah,' he laments another time, '"Would that I had never been born!" I may well say also: "Would that I had never written any books! I don't care if they are all destroyed."' 'I was tossed hither and thither,' he wrote once to Melanchthon, 'in the storms and floods of despair and of the wrath of God;' and to another friend: 'Many people think, because in the intervals I am cheerful in my outward bearing, that I live on a bed of roses; but God knows what my real life is.' He was incessantly at war with himself and his conscience, and according to his own confession he sought relief from these fits of despair in excessive drink, in card-playing, and in conviviality, or else in outbursts of vindictive fury against the Church and its teaching and institutions, especially the Pope.

In order to silence the agonies of his conscience, and to justify his endeavours after a separation from the Church, he worked himself into that frantic polemical frame of mind which surprised and terrified all his peaceably minded contemporaries, friends as well as foes. 'Have at them! have at them!' was his cry as often as he felt himself assailed with 'justification' that is his doctrine of righteousness through faith alone. 'They are sons of perdition who say one must not revile the Pope.' When he was unable to pray, he said, he used to picture to himself the Pope with his crew of 'reptiles and vermin,' so that he might rouse himself to a frenzy of wrath, and then his prayers became fervent. 'This will be my honour and glory,'

he said, 'and even so would I have it, that it will be said of me how full I was of abusive words, revilings, and cursings against the papists.' 'I will curse and gird those wretches till I am in my grave, and they shall not hear another good word from me. I will toll their knells with my thunder and lightning. For I cannot pray, I am compelled to curse. If I would say, "Hallowed be thy name," I am forced also to utter, "Accursed, damned, reviled be the name of the Pope." If I try to say, "Thy kingdom come," in spite of myself I am obliged to say also, "Cursed, damned, destroyed be the kingdom of the Pope." Veritably I pray in this manner every day with my lips and with my heart without ceasing.'

Everything was to be exterminated which excited his displeasure and was antagonistic to him.

Accordingly he preached irreconcilable enmity not only against the papacy and the *eingeteufelten, durchgeteufelten, übergeteufelten Herzen und Lügenmäuler* of all his other opponents on Christian territory, but also against the Jews. The latter were 'a stiff-necked, unbelieving, proud, wicked, abominable nation.' Therefore he demanded that their synagogues and schools should be laid waste with fire, 'and let whosoever can throw brimstone and pitch upon them; if one could hurl hell-fire at them so much the better; and what will not burn let it be covered with earth and buried underground, so that no man may ever see a brick or a stone of it again. And this must be done for the honour of our Lord and of Christianity.; so that God may see that we are indeed Christians. Let their houses also be shattered and destroyed, and let them flee to a shed or a stall; let their prayer-books and

Talmuds be taken from them, and their whole Bible too; let their Rabbis be forbidden, on pain of death, to teach henceforth any more; let the streets and highways be closed against them; let them be forbidden to practise usury, and let all their money and all their treasures of silver and gold be taken from them and put away in safety; and if all this is not enough, let them be driven like mad dogs out of the land.' 'I have done my part,' he says in conclusion; 'let each one see that he does his also.'

Luther's language became so ungovernable that Wilibald Pirkheimer said of him: 'To judge by his unbridled, slanderous tongue, one would think he had gone mad or was possessed by an evil spirit.' 'Luther knows no bounds,' wrote Bullinger, one of the most highly esteemed theologians of the new faith in Switzerland; 'his writing, indeed, is in great measure mere bluster and abuse. So that if God has given him a good cause to plead he spoils it all by his offensive language; he buries the good in so much evil that it can scarcely be perceived. He sends to the Devil all who do not entirely agree with him. In all his fault-finding there is an immense amount of personal animosity, and very little that is friendly and paternal. Many—aye, too many—are the preachers who have gathered out of Luther's books quite a vocabulary of abuse, which they fire off from their pulpits at God's poor people. Through the evil example of such preachers the habit of reviling and slandering is spreading through the whole community, and most clergymen now-a-days who wish to appear good "evangelicals" season their preaching with abuse and calumny. It is clear as daylight, and, alas! undeniable,

that nobody has sinned more seriously, grossly, and unbecomingly against Christian propriety and temperance in dealing with matters of faith than Luther has done. He labours to outdo himself in abuse.' 'I have repeatedly in my letters begged Melanchthon, the flower of Germany,' writes Theobald Billicanus, 'to try and calm down Luther's white heat, and to restrain his violence by friendly, soothing advice; for I seemed to foresee that the populace, inflamed to insurrection by this sort of preaching, plunge all Germany into unutterable misery.'

'What am I to say?' groans Ulrich Zasius in a letter to Boniface Amerbach. 'This shameless Luther turns all Scripture, the Old Testament and the New, from the first chapter of Genesis to the last of Revelations, into threats and curses against popes, bishops, and priests, as if through all the centuries God had had nothing else to do but to thunder anathemas against the priests.' Luther's spirit, he said, 'begets enmity, strife, friction, schism, hatred, and murder.'

CHAPTER II

THE POPULACE INFLAMED BY PREACHING AND THE PRESS. 1521–1523

THE armed attack expected during the sitting of the Diet of Worms did not take place. But the process of inflaming the people and stirring them up to revolt went on uninterruptedly, in spite of the decrees of the Diet. Demagogue preachers, some of them members of the secular clergy, and some renegade monks, tramped about the country, proclaiming their revolutionary doctrines, and in most districts of the Empire the circulation of printed lampoons, squibs, satires, and slanders of the most scurrilous description was allowed to go on unchecked.

The country population was especially ready to respond to the preaching of the agitators and to rise in rebellion against all existing institutions. The whole body of ecclesiastics, from the Pope down to the humblest mendicant friar, and every single statute and ordinance of the Church, were abused and ridiculed throughout the provinces in the grossest and most obscene manner; in drinking-taverns, in public bath-houses, on the market-place, in fields, and lanes, and highways, riotous mobs declaimed against 'the priests, those servants of Lucifer, those dragons

of hell, and all their abominable Sodomitish juggling with saints and idols, prayers and confessions, tithes and taxes.' The itinerant preachers went about representing the iniquities and oppression of the great secular lords as altogether intolerable.[1] 'Spiritual and secular tyrants and oppressors,' so said a scurrilous pamphlet of the year 1521, 'were the iniquitous cause of the plague that was raging in Germany. For at that time the discontent of the people was aggravated by a deadly pestilence mortality in all the German provinces, while in Bavaria no single town had escaped the epidemic. In Vienna 24,000 people had died, and the plague had not yet ceased. At Cologne, all along the Rhine, in Suabia, in Switzerland, and in Austria, the black death was raging.

One of the most influential of these travelling preachers and pamphleteers was the former Franciscan monk Johann Eberlin von Günzburg, who perambulated Switzerland, Suabia, Bavaria, Saxony, and other districts, and proclaimed the new gospel by word and pen. By a priest, he said, was meant a blasphemous godless individual, idle, avaricious, quarrelsome, cantankerous, adulterous; the wrath of God would break out against the priests, and it would be a wonder if the people did not stone them to death. Monks and priests had long been busy day and night plotting how they could ensnare us, while we had been careful and anxious about providing bodily comforts for ourselves, our children and households, and had not observed that our spiritual caretakers and providers, under a plausible outward semblance, had been

[1] See extracts from sermons and tracts in Hagen, ii. 155–227, and Baur, *Deutschland in den Jahren* 1517–1525.

compassing the destruction of our souls. Through the teaching of the universities and the mendicant friars the Germans had become worse than heathens and poorer than beggars. Of St. Francis, the founder of the Order to which he had formerly belonged, Eberlin wrote that he must have been either a fool, who ought to be well beaten with clubs, or a scoundrel who should be driven out of the country. It might, perhaps, be said that there were many saintly people belonging to his Order; but a corrupt tree bears no good fruit; at any rate they were only Satanic deceivers from whom the Order had sprung.

'O mother,' he exclaimed in a missive to the town of Ulm, 'who leavest thy child in a cloister, harder art thou than a stone, more cruel than a she-wolf or a lioness, yea, than Medea herself; a parent more like unto a murderer, a friend more cruel than a foe, fellow-citizens who are unto me as foreigners, Christ who is but Antichrist! O mother, hadst thou but strangled thy child in its cradle! for it can only lament like Job and Jeremiah over the day of its birth; for within the cloister it is as if one were in the jaws of Antichrist. Where monks are, there are the soldiers of the Devil assembled.'

All the monks, he said, ought to be driven out of the country as suppressors of the Word of God; the secular powers should strangle them all for their open and incessant blaspheming of God. Luther had taught again and again that the world ought to be freed from these cloister swine. 'All consecrated individuals, monks, nuns, priests, the whole lot of them,' he thundered out in another place, 'are marked with the Devil's brand, and are therefore accursed of God

and sold, like Ahab, to work wickedness. It would be easier for a mulatto to turn white than for a monk to do any good.'

All bishops and priests ought to marry, for God had ordained the state of marriage and had not excepted priests from the rule. The bishops who forbade priests to marry were sinners against the public good. A pamphlet in which he tried to prove this was ornamented with a title-page on which three couples were depicted as going through the marriage service to the accompaniment of music—a monk and a nun, a monk and a fashionable lady, and a bishop and another fashionable lady.

Concerning the buildings erected for purposes of divine worship Eberlin taught as follows: 'The Church is a house set apart not by God, but by the community itself, for its Christian assemblies. If a particular house no longer pleases the congregation, they may use it without scruple for any other purpose they choose—for a shop, a bathing-house, a bakery, a slaughter-house.' 'It is the beginning of all evil, and a gross artifice of the Devil's, that we have been duped into believing that God wants a house from us, and thus we have been drawn away from Christ and his Spirit to the pomp and splendour of this world.' Through churches and church ornaments, altars, pictures, and glass work, the country has been impoverished. 'Your pious ancestors,' he said to the people of Ulm concerning their cathedral, 'were misguided to build so costly a church, on which so much money was spent, and still is spent every year, that might far better be given to the poor instead of to the idols of the temple. It is by no means wrong to have a house for edification, but

God will take no greater pleasure in it than in a bathing-house or a coach-house, or a council-house. May God give you sense to pull down all your marble churches and to build with the materials fine hospitals or houses for poor people! I would that hailstorms might destroy all the churches in the land, and that they might be rebuilt without any paintings or costly ornamentation or mass vestments.

It was not necessary, Eberlin told the peasants, that every village should have its own priest. 'Our forefathers in Germany have been Christians for several hundred years, and they have often had as many as ten or twelve villages under one pastor. When your conscience pricks you, seek advice and consolation from a pious trustworthy Christian; if you can't have a priest, go to a layman; if there is no man at hand, go to a woman, be it in life or when at the point of death. Suffer death rather than let yourself be driven to the confessional. Be satisfied with going to church on festivals; if you cannot go be satisfied with believing. If you cannot have the Sacrament administered to you at death it is enough that you wished for it.' Above all he insisted that the priests of the Mass ought to be abolished; the Mass was blasphemy of God, it was like throwing the Eucharist into a pigsty. In a treatise on the 'Reform of the Clerical Class' he went so far as to say that no other prayers should be taught the people than the Lord's Prayer and the Belief, and only the Apostles' Creed, not the Athanasian.

In another pamphlet, a 'New Organisation for the Secular State,' written in 1521, Eberlin made the following proposals, among others, for the reorganisa-

tion of society: 'No work or calling other than agriculture shall be considered honourable; no foreign goods shall be imported, except in case of extreme bodily need, [even the importing of corn was only to be allowed in dire necessity]; no mercantile association of more than three members shall be allowed to exist; game, birds, and fish shall be the common property of all, to be caught for their use by any who like; everybody shall be free to cut wood for his needs. For half a *Pfennig* as much bread shall be sold as a strong man can eat at one meal; a measure of wine shall be sold for a *Kreuzer*, and the capacity of the measure shall be the quantity that two men who drink reasonably can drink at one meal. Every office, that of king as well as others, shall be filled by election; in all councils there shall be an equal number of nobles and of peasants, but no clerical members in any. Those who have less than a hundred *Gulden* shall pay no taxes; whoever has more must pay a *Heller*[1] weekly.'

'In the towns no unnecessarily expensive houses must be built, excepting buildings intended for the common use. Every individual whose expenditure is out of proportion to his means shall be handed over to the magistrates. No one shall be allowed to bequeath anything to public institutions.'

The secular magistrates alone shall have the care of the poor, and they must introduce free and compulsory education. Under this last head Eberlin drew up the following remarkable scheme: 'All children, boys and girls, must be sent to school at the age of three and kept there till they are eight. The schools must be

[1] A small copper coin.

maintained at the public expense. In the schools the children must be taught the Christian law out of the Gospel and the writings of St. Paul; further, they must learn to understand Latin and German well, and Greek and Hebrew they must learn to read and understand a little; they must be taught to play on some kind of stringed instrument; and they must also learn the arts of geometry, arithmetic, and astronomy, and, finally, botany and the knowledge of ordinary remedies for diseases. When a child is eight years old it may either be put to a handicraft, or allowed to continue its studies.'

'It seems as if the world had become idiotic or visionary,' said the author of the 'Complaint of a Simple Cloister Brother,' 'there are so many fantastic people abroad putting all sorts of ridiculous notions into the heads of the lower orders, telling them they must learn this, that, and the other, addling their brains and puffing them up with nonsensical ideas.'

In the higher schools Eberlin proposed that philosophy should no longer be taught, except that which Didymus Faventinus (Melanchthon) had taught in his oration against Thomas Placentinum; also that no scholastic doctor should henceforth be read except for criticism, and that all priests' laws or decretals should be burnt.

No magisterial body was to have power any longer to deal with any matter whatever, whether in the towns or the provinces, without the help and advice of special counsellors chosen by the community. All ancient imperial and sacerdotal privileges were to be abolished. All subjects were to have equal rights, and each

individual was to be allowed to decide for himself or herself what was legal or illegal. There should no longer be any judges or lawyers.

A complete remodelling of all existing laws and ordinances was also advocated in a pamphlet which appeared in 1522 under the title 'Teutscher Nation Notturft; die Ordnung und Reformation aller Ständ im römischen Reich.'[1] Here too it was recommended that doctors, both of canon and secular law, should be done away with; and that all imperial secular privileges heretofore recognised should be annulled, excepting such as could clearly be proved to rest on legitimate grounds, and to be free from all suspicion of fraud and artifice. Further, 'all tolls, duties, passports, fines, taxes, and exactions which have hitherto been current in the Empire are to be abolished, excepting such as are recognised as necessary: so that selfishness may not tyrannise over the community, and that there be no hindrance to trade and daily labour.' 'No merchant shall extend his business beyond the sum of 10,000 *Gulden*; whatever is in excess of this shall be forfeited to the Empire.' 'Veritably, O ye princes,' says the unknown author of this pamphlet, 'ye lay snares to make unlawful gain; ye drink the blood and the sweat of the poor folk. Truly we have had enough of this: be warned.' 'Ye fill your courts with flatterers and hypocrites and sycophants, for ye cannot endure the truth. Any one who can enrich you or enrich the profits of your offices, that man is a meritorious fellow: nobody asks if the profits come

[1] 'The Needs of the Germanic Nation, and the Reform and Reorganisation of all Classes in the Roman Empire.' See Hagen, ii. 338–342.

lawfully, so long as they come, as if God had created his people for the use and benefit of you fools. As for you, extortioners in the land, you are no longer wanted. Through the wealthy ecclesiastics all the people are turned into beggars. Go to now, ye pious Christians, nobles and commoners, rich and poor, old and young, consider honestly, and lay it well to heart, whether these things can be any longer endured. I should like to know to whom the great church dignitaries are of use. I should like much also to hear from any one who can tell me what Christ our Redeemer, when he was on earth, ever said about monks and nuns. If the clergy will not distribute the goods of the Church they may be sure that God will reward them after their deserts—that is to say, will take their property from them by force. You have oppressed and ground down the whole population of the Empire, and now your own turn is coming. As you have oppressed the nation, so now it will rise up against you, so that your possessions shall be plundered like the goods of an enemy, and you shall be turned out of house and home.'

'They are trooping about in crowds in the towns and villages,' we read in the 'Complaint of a Simple Cloister Brother,' 'and disseminating libels and caricatures against the clergy, high or low, and they are preaching that no more tithes and taxes are to be paid to them, and still more that everything they have is to be taken from them and that they are to be driven out and destroyed. And they are twisting the Holy Scriptures to the service of their accursed work; they are inciting the people against all authority and all law; and the Word of God must needs be

used as a pretext for their scandalous revolutionary proceedings.'

Another of these demagogue preachers, one Christopher Schapper of Memminger, proved to the people from the Bible that the payment of tithes had been abolished by the New Testament; that it was unchristian to take rent, fines, and taxes from believers, or to impose them; that heaven was open to the peasants, but closed against the nobles and the clergy. At Kempten, Matheys Waybel preached in 1523 that rent and tithes were not to be paid, and that the precepts of the Holy Catholic Church must be altogether disregarded and nullified, for by them the poor at Kempten, and indeed throughout in the country, had been cruelly deceived. The preacher Nicolaus Schweikart went about, in the garb of a peasant, haranguing against the giving of tithes to the priests, and saying that the latter had cheated the people quite enough, and that they deserved rather to have *St. Velten*[1] given them.

There were a good many laymen also among these preachers. 'Ignorant uneducated laymen,' says Eberlin von Günzburg, 'farmers, miners, corn-threshers, understand the Gospel better, and can teach it better, than a whole village, or town-chapter of abbots and priests—yea, better than the most erudite doctors of divinity.' 'One finds nowadays,' wrote the former Franciscan monk Heinrich Ketterbach in 1523, 'at Nuremberg, Ulm, Augsburg, in the Rhineland, in Switzerland, in Saxony, women, young girls, servants,

[1] In allusion to a form of cursing common among the people at that time. *St. Velten* (St. Valentine) appears to have been connected in some way with epilepsy, and to say 'Potz Velten' to any one was equivalent to the wish that that person might be afflicted with epilepsy.—TRANSLATOR.

labourers, artisans, tailors, shoemakers, innkeepers, coopers, troopers, knights, *bacchants*[1] who know more about the Bible than is known at all the universities or by all the priests all over the world, and they can prove this—ay, and do prove it—every day.' 'If the Emperor Charles were as learned as Luther's servant-man is, he would not let that stupid monk, his father confessor Glapion, make such a ninny of him that he is despised all the world over, and looked upon as a mere cipher.'

Amongst these lay preachers there figured pre-eminently a peasant named Karsthaus, who carried on his agitation chiefly in the Rhine districts, in Strasburg and Basle. 'A lay individual named Karsthaus,' we read in an old Strasburg document, 'a most seditious agitator and a fanatical propagandist of the Lutheran heresy, is perambulating the town of Strasburg, stirring up contempt of all respectable well-behaved people, collecting the populace in the streets and squares, and filling their heads with all manner of improper, erroneous, and heretical ideas. Amongst other things this turbulent scoundrel has declared that now is the opportune moment for completely exterminating the clergy.' And when a bystander asked what reason he had for saying this Karsthaus answered: 'Because the clergy have taken money from the laity on false pretences. The clergy have gone on preaching hitherto that there was a place called Purgatory, and that souls could be released from it by prayers and money, which is altogether false.' The name of Karsthaus became a watchword in the thousands of revolutionary leaflets and pamphlets which were distributed among the

[1] Raw students who had newly entered the university.

peasants by hawkers. That which had the widest circulation was an anonymous publication emanating from the Sickingen party, a dialogue between the peasant Karsthaus and Franz von Sickingen, entitled 'Neue Karsthaus.'[1]

Just as Hutten in his dialogue 'The Robbers' had advocated an alliance between the nobles and the towns against the clergy, so here a league between the nobles and the peasants was recommended. He had become one with the nobility, said Karsthaus on the title-page, and for his part he would fall to with his own hands. In the present bloody reckoning with the priests the only thing wanting was a general at their head. Sickingen described the clergy to the peasants as devouring wolves, whereupon Karsthaus exclaims: 'Therefore we must strike in among them with pickaxes and flails.' On Sickingen's explaining that the Pope has set his Chair up above the Almighty, and therefore is bound to fall like Lucifer, the answer follows: 'So let him fall in the name of all the devils, and may the Devil help him up again!' Sickingen goes on to say that they must set themselves free from all the ecclesiastics who 'with their ceremonies and juggling' try to impose on the unenlightened masses; God only asks to be worshipped in spirit and in truth; He cares nothing for all these churches of wood and stone; therefore the greater number of them must be pulled down, and above all they must follow the example of the Bohemian Ziska, who exterminated the monks and the priests. For as long as the churches remain standing, he says, there will always be an incentive to priestcraft, and the

[1] A new pickaxe.

corrupt faith will not be rooted out from among the people; therefore let these superfluities be removed and all monastic orders be abolished. Ziska showed his wisdom in destroying the churches; for if he had left them standing it would have been as he predicted. 'If the nests were allowed to remain,' he said to the Bohemians, 'in ten years' time the birds would all be back again.' 'Neither can I sufficiently praise his great good sense,' Sickingen continues, 'in having driven out and exterminated all the monks; for he judged rightly in thinking that the origin of all heresy and unbelief lay in those hypocrites and extortioners who could never be satisfied. If their destruction did not quickly come about, the Christian population would be made paupers by them. In urging a violent onslaught against the clergy Sickingen took his stand on the words of St. Paul: 'Where the Spirit of God is, there is liberty.'

As an appendix to the dialogue there follow thirty-six articles, accompanied by the attestation: 'Thus Helferich, nobleman, Heinz, knight, and Karsthaus have sworn.' The jurors promise one another to regard the Pope as Antichrist, and the cardinals as apostles of the Devil. Every papal legate shall be treated as a common enemy of Germany; every mendicant friar who begs for a bit of cheese shall have a stone weighing four pounds thrown at him; every clerical official or emissary shall be hunted with hounds and pelted with mud by the children. They will aid and encourage Hutten in strangling and murdering the Romish courtlings and their hangers-on, and will not hesitate to flog or trample underfoot any priest who comes in their way. To all Luther's foes and

detractors they swear enmity; the emissaries who bring over ecclesiastical decrees shall have their ears cut off the first time they come, and their eyes put out if they come a second time. Festivals shall be done away with, and only Sunday kept holy; and all images, whether of stone, wood, gold, or silver, shall be destroyed; God shall be worshipped in spirit only. In these and other articles the confederates swore to risk their lives and their prosperity, and called God to witness that in all their projects they had a single eye to the welfare of the Fatherland and the establishment of divine truth.

The following verses from Murner's poem 'Vom grossen Lutherischen Narren' accord exactly with the doctrines set forth in the thirty articles of the 'Neue Karsthaus' and in innumerable pamphlets of the time :—

They preach no godly word of peace,
But only how to slay and fleece,
And how their *Bundschuhs* to increase.

Their Gospel teaching is all schism,
Riot, topsy-turvyism;
They're worse than any heathen Turk,
And soon all men will cease to work;
The Gospel, as they understand,
Is looting cloisters, churches, land.

They're wondrous knaves at trickery;
To plunder is their ministry,
And pillage others' property.

The common people they hoodwink,
And what they're at these little think:
And yet it's all pure Christian teaching,
Although a pack of lies they're preaching.

The 'poor man' of Germany, Murner prophesies,

who is deluded with promises of a fair share in the booty, will come off about as well as did the 'poor man' of Bohemia.

> For when the goods they all have tal en
> And a mighty heap have maken,
> The poor will get as fair a lot
> As poor men in Bohemia got.
> There too the people thought to reap
> An equal portion of the heap;
> But lo! the rich man took the whole
> And left the poor man making dole.

Things fell out, indeed, as Joseph Grünbeck, secretary to the Emperor Maximilian, had predicted in 1507, long before Murner. 'Oppression and tyranny will not merely be doubled, they will be trebled, they will be quadrupled, and selfishness will be multiplied to such an extent that both clergy and laity will shrink from no falsehood and injustice in order to acquire riches for themselves. Therefore the voices of the widows and orphans, defrauded of their rights, cry again and again to God for vengeance; and that vengeance will soon come; it will fall on our own heads if we do not straightway turn to God.' 'I fear that the Empire will rot inwardly, decay, and shrivel up; I fear that gruesome tumult and sedition will be stirred up in the Fatherland. I verily fear and dread that our strength and manliness will be changed into the trembling of cowards; that war, famine, and pestilence will rage unceasingly, till the whole might, vigour, and marrow has been drained out of the whole body, from the least as well as from the greatest of its members. Young and old, rich and poor, laymen and clergy, thirst for gold, and are reckless as to the means by which they obtain it; and the day is coming when,

as a judgment of God, secular matters will be mixed up with ecclesiastical matters and will infect them with the poison of worldliness. But in the present calamities, which the clergy are bringing on themselves by their sins, the laity will have to share, and will indeed have the worst share of the distress. And though the clergy are the first to taste this cup of affliction, the laity will have to drink the sour dregs that remain at the bottom.[1] The persecution and desecration of the clergy will be speedily followed by rebellion against all earthly rule.'

Numerous astrological forecasts on the destiny of the nation were published abroad. The burden of them was that much adversity and opposition was in store for princes and rulers everywhere in Germany; that the people were leaguing themselves together and forming *Bundschuhs* not against one ruler only but against almost all; there would be a great deluge which would upset and alter everything on earth. The date prophesied for the deluge was about the year 1524.

'Everything that is written nowadays,' says the 'Complaint of a Simple Cloister Brother,' 'tends to excite general tumult, destruction, and sacrilege—both spiritual and secular. The worst of all verily is, not that they attack the worldliness of the clergy and the splendour and luxury of the bishops and high prelates, for this is much to be regretted, and it would be well if their riches were diminished, and they were compelled to simple and chaste living; the worst of all is rather that everything is upset which appertains to the service

[1] See Murner's poem, *Vom grossen Lutherischen Narren* ('Of the Great Lutheran Fool'), pp. 23–28.

of God in churches and cloisters and private houses. The modesty of the young is disappearing; they are taught to blaspheme and scoff at all that is venerable. O God, what a world it is now, when people revile and curse all that was sacred to our parents, all that we learned and practised in our youth, all through which, by the grace of God, our parents obtained salvation in death, and through which we also have hoped for salvation in death by the same grace! The commemoration of Christ's Sacrifice in the Holy Mass is reviled as idolatry of the Devil, and it is idolatry also to worship the dear saints and to fast and pray for souls in purgatory. Brother is stirred up against brother, the lower classes against the upper, and everything is upside down, and everybody against everybody; and must we not fear war and rebellion? Such a gospel was never preached by Christ as is announced by Luther and his followers.'

In a 'Mission from a Nun to her Brother' we find similar lamentations. Monks and nuns were reproached that they thought to be saved by orders, by cowls, by prayers and fasts; but such a creed was far from being theirs, and had never been taught them; on the contrary they knew well from the Holy Scriptures that all human righteousness was but as a filthy rag, and only through Jesus did they hope to be saved. The monks could no more be saved by the cowl than the burghers of Cologne by their civic garb. Because some individuals in cloisters led scandalous lives, it did not follow that it was right to condemn them all, any more than one would be justified in condemning all burgomasters and councillors because some of them were unworthy. 'I know there are a great many

pious and honourable people in cloisters, and also undoubtedly among the citizens of towns and the peasants in villages. And it would be well if people let each other alone and recognised each other as brothers and sisters in Christ, and if each one took heed to do right in his own station, and left off backbiting and slandering others, for, as St. Paul says to the Romans in the first chapter, God hates backbiters.' 'I do not say this, dear brother, concerning you,' the nun goes on, 'but concerning those who highly esteem Luther's teaching, and from whom you hear nothing else than abuse and calumny of popes, bishops, and nuns, fasts and prayers. If that's what they learn from Luther, I appeal to your understanding whether such teaching is more like honey or poison; in no part of the Gospel do I find that Christ taught his followers to slander and revile.'

'The papists complain,' wrote Henry Kettenbach in a defence of Luther, 'that Luther did not preserve evangelical and brotherly love; he was so bitter and envious, and abused and slandered people. In this, however, Luther was only following the example of Christ and the Apostles. It was more necessary, he said, nowadays to preach against the subtle, insinuating, saintly seduction of the world by tonsured folk than to preach against open sinners, Turks and heathens, thieves, murderers, and adulterers. Luther pitted against you papists is, in fact, like Christ, Paul, Peter, and Elias. How, then, can he be doing wrong? He has no right to flatter rascals. They do not deserve good words from him; for blind, blind, blind they are determined to remain. Therefore I say that to drive out and exterminate such as these is

no more sin than it was for Daniel and Elias to drive out the evil-doers.'

The tone of the whole mass of polemical literature of that period was set by Luther as well in his earlier writings as in the later ones which he sent forth into the world from the Wartburg. In a treatise entitled 'The Abuse of the Mass,' written at the end of 1521 and printed at the beginning of the following year, he called the holy mass an outgrowth of hell and a scandalous piece of idolatry. Every true Christian must be aware, he said, that in the New Testament there are no outward visible priests except those that the Devil has set up by means of human lies. The priesthood was in all Christians, in the spirit only, without form or substance. 'Whence come ye then, ye priests of idols?' he asks of the clergy. 'Are ye not thieves and plunderers and blasphemers of the Church, who scandalously abuse for your own glory, pride, greed, and malice the holy name of "priest," which is the common property of all Christians, but which ye have taken by force as your private property? Ye are not priests, but intolerable burdens on the earth.' As, then, the priesthood is *null*, he goes on, so its laws are *null*, and still more void and *null* are the works and sacrifice, which have originated through the laws of the priests. Hence it follows that the laws of the Pope are empty mockery and lies, that the popish priesthood is nothing more than a sign and an outward show; the popish mass, which they call a sacrifice, mere idolatry, and worse idolatry even than that of which Jews or heathen are guilty, or ever have been guilty.'

Luther was never weary of declaring, 'on divine authority and the evidence of the Scriptures,' that the

priests were nothing but 'Priests of the Devil,' and that in all their books and writings it was only the Devil himself who spoke. 'When, therefore, any Christian man,' so he said, 'beheld a great innumerable crowd of monks and priests with their masses, their sacrifices, their ordinances, and all their works, he saw in truth nothing but the Devil's own people and servants.' It was far better to be a hangman or a murderer than a priest or a monk. The Pope, 'the Devil's hog,' had made the whole priesthood into the 'dregs of all that was most execrable;' the consecration vow stamped the priests with the 'mark of the beast' of the Book of Revelation.

The bishops were a special mark for Luther's attacks. 'There are no people on earth whom God is more set against than those idolaters and hypocrites; they are unbelieving, unchristian, ignorant apes, monsters and prodigies sent by God in his wrath. Why, then, should you be afraid of them, or fearful for them, and not much rather despise them and look upon them as spots and blemishes of the whole world, as St. Peter says, with all their laws, lies, pomp, and hateful habits and customs?

He indulged in the same sort of language against the universities, which he denounced as temples of Moloch and dens of murderers. 'Out of these murderous dens there go forth the locusts which cover the whole world, in every corner, spiritual and secular, for verily since the foundation of the universe the Devil has found no better way of crushing the Gospel and the faith than by means of the universities.' It made him furious to think that the largest and best part of the young generation were

educated in these dens. His utterances in this respect are specially noteworthy, as showing how full of vitality was the Church in Germany at that time, in what high esteem the universities stood, and what fervent zeal for learning had up till then prevailed in all parts of the country. 'Everybody is of opinion,' says Luther, 'that in no spot under heaven can the young be better instructed than at the universities, so that even the monks go there also.' 'Whoso has not entered or studied at a university can do nothing, but any one who has can do all things. For it is believed that in the universities all arts, human and divine, are learnt; and therefore everybody thinks that no one can do better than send his sons there, and that he is doing God a great service by offering his children up as sacrifices in these high places, to be turned into preachers, priests, and servants of God, who are needed by God and man.' 'These folk make great lords, doctors, and magisters, who are skilful in ruling other people, as indeed we see with our eyes that nobody can be a preacher, or a pastor, unless he has become a "master" or a "doctor," or at least has *entered* a university.'

It was one of Luther's deepest causes of lamentation that all the world wanted to be taught and ecclesiasticised at the universities.

His constantly reiterated complaints on this point make him the most convincing witness to the fact that throughout the whole German nation at that period there was not only universal outward conformity, but also warm inward attachment to the Church. 'The mind of each one,' he said, 'was set on how he could make himself into a holy ecclesiastic—priest or

monk—or how he could institute church services.' 'Whenever a young lad was to read his first mass, how blessed did the mother think herself that she had borne such a son and supplied God with a minister!' 'There was no father or mother in the land,' he said, 'who did not wish to make priests, monks, or nuns out of their children; so that one fool has made others. Thus all the young people and the best part of the world have flocked in crowds to the devil.' 'At a monstrous cost in money,' he complains, 'we have founded these devil's larvæ, these monks, these hobgoblin high schools, and dressed up shoals of doctors, preachers, masters, priests, and monks, or rather great, fat, coarse asses, in red and brown birettas, like sows with pearls and gold chains, who have taught us nothing good, but have gone on making us blinder and blinder and more and more idiotic, and eaten up all our goods into the bargain.' 'It is a lamentable pity that a boy should be obliged to study twenty years and longer in order that he may become a priest and read masses; and when the end is accomplished then forsooth he has become blessed, and blessed is the mother who bore such a child.'

And again: 'If only a man has put on a priest's frock, all the world must worship and bow down before him. Everybody joins in the worship, and the mother who bore him becomes "blessed."'

From the standpoint of his new gospel Luther considered this warm attachment of the nation to the Church, as well as the university system which fostered it, as one of the worst evils and greatest hindrances to the spread of his teaching. He adopted, therefore, every possible means of

compassing the downfall of the universities, those 'dens of the latest horrors,' those 'synagogues of corruption.'

At the conclusion of his pamphlet on the 'Abuse of the Mass' Luther repeats his expressions of delight that the Wittenbergers have abolished the mass. 'Would to God,' he says, 'that this Pharisaic indignation might increase and spread, till the priests cry out in a body: "See there in Wittenberg, there is no more divine service; they hold no more masses, they no longer play the organ, and they have all become heretics and lunatics!"' It displeased him greatly that the Elector Frederic of Saxony, 'deceived by the papists,' had enlarged and beautified the Church of All Saints at Wittenberg, for, said Luther, he might have fed numbers of poor people in Saxony with the money he spent on the church; he feared also that the money and the goods of the princes were seldom worthy of being used for Christian causes, as they were seldom acquired otherwise than as Nimrod had obtained his wealth and possessions. For the rest, however, he said that the Elector was no tyrant or fool; he listened gladly to the truth, and was tolerant of it, and hence the Wittenbergers would find it all the easier to accomplish the work they had begun. In the Elector Frederic the ancient prophecy would be fulfilled: 'The Emperor Frederic will recover the Holy Sepulchre.' For what else can we understand by the Holy Sepulchre than the Holy Scriptures, in which the truth of Christ, murdered by the papists, has lain buried, and which its keepers—that is, the mendicant Orders and the heretics—have watched and guarded, so that no disciple of Christ's should come and steal it? For as to the grave

in which the Lord lay, God wants that back as little as he wants all the cows in Switzerland.' 'Now nobody can deny,' he goes on, 'that among you in Saxony, under the Elector Frederic, the living truth of the Gospel has come forth again. How if I were to boast myself that I had been an angel at the grave, or Mary Magdalen? And although some would maintain that I was an impostor, I will carry on the pretence and will amuse myself with marvelling how it comes to pass that God has willed to waken up his Word again in this despised corner of the world, and that a wonder is seen here which I think has not happened in any other country—namely, that the towns and villages round Wittenberg, and also the citizens, have Hebrew names, like the towns and hamlets round Jerusalem. The people of Wittenberg had been the first to see the "pure countenance of the Gospel," and now it was their duty zealously to spread it about and let others see it, albeit preserving harmony among themselves and stretching out their hands to one another without strife or discord.'

In another pamphlet of the same period, entitled 'Memoranda and Information concerning the Cloisters and all Ecclesiastical Vows,' Luther denounced all clerical vows because it was impossible to keep them. He taught that nobody should be compelled to confess, or even to be baptised. 'I approve of faith and baptism,' he wrote on September 17, 1521, 'but nobody should be coerced in these matters, only admonished and exhorted, and then left free to decide.' In like manner he said in his treatise on the confessional: 'All Sacraments must be free to each individual. Whosoever does not wish to be baptised, let him go without. Whoever does not wish to receive the Sacrament is in

his full right. Also whoever refuses to go to confession is wholly in the right before God.'

These opinions could not but exercise a disturbing and pernicious influence on the habitual religious life of the people.

Luther's assertions and injunctions were all the more impressive and fruitful in results from the manner in which he knew so well how to clothe them. He was a mighty master of the German language. His vocabulary was strong and incisive, his style full of life and movement; his similes in their naked plainness were instinct with vigour and went straight to the mark.

He drew from the rich mines of the vernacular tongue, and in popular eloquence and oratory few equalled him. Where he still spoke in the spirit of the catholic past, his language was often truly sublime. In his works of instruction and edification he more than once reveals a depth of religious grasp which reminds one of the days of German mysticism.

How beautiful, for instance, are the passages on the beatitude of the soul in the booklet published in 1520 on the 'Freedom of a Christian Man,' where the union of the soul with Christ through the bridal ring of faith is compared to that of a bride and bridegroom! 'A Christian man becomes, by faith, so lifted up above everything that he is spiritually lord of all things, for nothing can harm his felicity; yea, everything is subjected unto him and tends to heighten his bliss. That is indeed a high and glorious dignity, a truly omnipotent rulership, a spiritual sovereignty.' 'Above and beyond this we are priests, which is much more than being kings, because the priesthood makes us worthy to come into the presence of God and to pray for others.'

'For this has Christ redeemed us to himself, that we may intercede and pray for one another in the spirit.' 'Who can fathom the height and glory of a Christian man? Through his sovereignty he is supreme over all things; through his priesthood he is supreme over God.' Thus joyously and triumphantly did Luther look out upon the world, so long as he had an inch of the old faith to stand on.

But there are even finer passages than these in this publication. One cannot help asking oneself how the same hand which delighted to shatter as with a sledge hammer all that had hitherto been held sacred and venerable, could also touch so tenderly the chords of divine love. Here are other passages: 'But enough has been said about the inner man. Let us come now to the other part, the outward man. Here we have to consider "works" in which man must not be idle, for verily the body must be driven and exercised with fasts, vigils, labour, and all suitable discipline, so that it may become obedient to and be brought into conformity with the inward man and with faith, and not hinder or withstand the latter, as is its habit when not itself restrained. For the inner man is at one with God, is happy and joyous in the love of Christ, who has done so much for it, and finds all its delight in serving God in free love.' 'Every Christian man should willingly become a servant to help his neighbour, to dwell with him and act with him as God through Christ has dealt with himself. And all this for love only, seeking no other gain than the praise of God.' 'Behold how out of faith flow love and delight in God, and out of love a free, willing, joyous life of disinterested service to one's neighbour.' 'In this way,' says Luther in conclusion,

'must the good things of heaven flow from one to the other and become common property: from Christ to us men and women, from us to our neighbours—whoever they be, that are in need of them.' Through the soul of Luther, as he penned these pages, there seems to have poured a rich stream of influence from the catholic past; they carry one back to that eventful day when he took the vows of monkhood, and out of pure love to God, bound himself by an oath to hold fast through life to the holy precepts of the Gospel.

In this same tract, however, on the 'Freedom of a Christian Man,' he demolished afresh the whole system of Church organisation built up by the centuries, and took his stand solely on the plain letter of Holy Writ, which he declared to be the sole fountain-head of faith, the one authoritative rule for Christians. And then he himself set to work to undermine this authority of the Scriptures by his prefaces to separate books in his translation of the New Testament.[1]

For instance, he rejected the Epistle of St. James as a thoroughly matter-of-fact letter which had no evangelical character in it. 'I do not regard it,' he said, 'as the writing of any Apostle.' 'The right test,' he says, 'by which to judge these books is whether they preach Christ. Whatever does not preach Christ is not apostolic, even though it be written by St. Peter or St. Paul. And, on the other hand, whatever does preach Christ would be apostolic even if it proceeded from Judas, Pilate, or Herod. But this James does nothing more than preach the law and obedience to the law, and mixes the one with the other in a chaotic manner. Therefore I will not admit him in my Bible among the

[1] See Döllinger's *Reformation*, iii. 139–173.

number of true canonical writers. But at the same time I will forbid none to place and esteem him as they please.'

Of the Epistle to the Hebrews he declared that it did not proceed from Paul or any other Apostle. 'Who did write it, however, is unknown, and will remain unknown yet a while; but it is not of any importance.'

With regard to the Book of Revelations his verdict was: 'As to this book, I allow each individual to form his own opinion, and will not bind down any one to my own judgment, or my own ignorance. I say what I feel. To me there is a want of unity in this book; it seems to me neither apostolic nor prophetic. Let each one esteem it as it strikes him. As for me, this book does not appeal to my mind.'

Thus, then, the authority of the Holy Scriptures was only to be recognised by each one in so far as they accorded with his individual ideas.

'What will be the outcome of Luther's principles with regard to the interpretation and the authority of the Bible?' asked Karl von Bodmann, as Emser and Cochlaeus had already asked. 'He rejects this, that, or the other book as unapostolic, as not genuine, simply because it does not accord with his views. Others, on similar grounds, will reject other books, and finally people will refuse to believe any part of the Bible, and will treat it like any secular book. And yet they are crying out indignantly that Luther's translations are forbidden to the common people, as if this were an unheard-of piece of tyranny.[1] Numbers already scoff at the

[1] Prohibitive edicts against Luther's translation of the New Testament were issued in Bavaria, in Austria, in the Mark of Brandenburg, and in

reverence in which the Bible is held, and even repudiate the doctrine of the divinity of Christ, just as they repudiate the Church and its teaching. And this melancholy state of things grows worse and worse the more the authority of the Church is attacked by Luther in her overseers, the Pope and the bishops.

In the year 1522 Luther addressed as a New Year's greeting to the Pope 'An Exposition of the Bull *In Coena Domini*,' i.e. 'the Bull of the Evening Carousals of his Archholiness my Lord the Pope.'

The Pope appears again in this document as Antichrist, 'who surpasses the iniquity of the Dragon of Hell and his apostle "Knavery."' 'Open your eyes, ye blind miserable papists,' he says, 'behold your idol, how he is striving against Christ and doing nothing but devil's work.' 'The Pope is driving the world to forsake the Christian faith and believe in his devil's lies, so that whether for body or for soul the Pope's rule is ten times worse than that of the Turks. And if Christ himself should not overthrow Antichrist, according to the Scriptures, and we were to set about destroying the Turks, we should have to begin with the Pope.' 'The Rhine was scarcely big enough to drown the whole

the Duchy of Saxony. A mandate of Duke George of Saxony, November 7, 1522, enjoined that before Christmas all the copies in circulation in the duchy should be handed over to the magistrates. Hieronymus Emser, the Duke's court chaplain, published a pamphlet in which he stated the reasons why the common people were forbidden to read this translation—viz. not only on account of the false rendering of some of the passages, but because the notes of glossaries spoilt the appearance of the Bible. The Leipzig Theological Faculty also advised the Duke, in a letter of January 23, 1523, to enforce the edict against Luther's prefaces and glossaries, even if the translation (which was not the case) were quite correct. Emser recommended the bishops to have a new accurate translation executed by a body of learned men. See Seidemann, *Erläuterungen zur Reformationsgeschichte*, pp. 51–55.

accursed gang of Romish extortioners, the faithful and well-beloved apostles of the Pope—cardinals, archbishops, bishops, and abbots.'

In another polemical pamphlet, to which he gave the name of 'Sincere Exhortation to all Christians to beware of Insurrection and Turbulence,' he expressed himself with equal violence. Now that the scandalous and injurious conduct of the Pope and his adherents, their tyranny and misdeeds, had come to the light of day, it was plain to see, he said in his preface, that things were tending to insurrection, and that priests, monks, and bishops, with the whole of the ecclesiastical class, would be destroyed and expelled, if they did not set to work in earnest to reform themselves. For the poor man, exasperated and embittered by the injuries (beyond all measure and possibility of endurance) which he had suffered in his goods, his body, and his soul, would not and could not bear such treatment any longer, and he had right good reason to strike in at his oppressors with clubs and flails, as Karsthaus had threatened to do. He, on his part, was by no means sorry to hear that the clergy were in such great fear and anxiety, and he wished that their terrors were even greater. 'Such fear and terror Scripture assigns to all enemies of God, as the beginning of their chastisement. Therefore it is just, and it pleases me well, that such a pestilence should overtake the papists who persecute and condemn the truth of God.'

At the same time Luther in no way desired an uncontrolled rising of the people: what he wished was, not that the uneducated masses should break loose blindly, but that the rulers and authorities should arrange for the suppression of popish knavery, deception,

and tyranny; this they were bound to do in virtue of their magisterial powers, each prince and ruler in his own territory. 'For that which is brought about by legal authority is not of the nature of insurrection.' 'The people must take no part in the transactions except under orders of the ruling powers.' 'Therefore,' he says to the people, 'respect the powers that be. So long as they do not proceed to action, do you keep quiet with hand and mouth and heart, and take nothing upon yourselves. If, however, you can prevail upon the authorities to take action, you are at liberty to do so.' 'But if you should say: What are we to do, if the rulers will not begin? I answer: You are to do nothing.'

Furthermore every Christian must help in carrying on the work that Luther proposes to do, and must persevere courageously in making known among the people the knavery and deceit of the Pope and the papists both by writing and speaking. They must do as he was doing—'Teach, preach, talk, and write; show how human laws are as nothing. Advise and hinder everybody you can from becoming priest, monk, or nun, and persuade those who have taken vows to cast them off. Give no more money for bulls, tapers, bells, altars, churches, but cry aloud that the Christian life consists in faith and love; let us go on like this for two years more, and you will see how much will be left of pope, bishop, priest, monk, nun, bell, tower, mass, vigils, cowls, hoods, rules, ordinances, and the whole pestilential edifice of popish government.' 'Each one who reads the Word of Christ can freely boast that his mouth is as the mouth of Christ. I indeed am certain that my words are not mine own, but Christ's; therefore my mouth must be his whose words it speaks.'

One might have answered him that he himself, on January 27, 1517, had written to the Nuremberg jurist Christopher Scheurl that 'it was the height of arrogance to deem oneself the habitation of Christ. Such self-glorification could only be tolerated in an Apostle.'

But to such an answer Luther would have retorted in the language of his letter to the Elector Frederic on March 5, 1522: 'Your Highness knows, or perhaps does not know, so let your Highness now learn the fact that I have received the Gospel not from men, but direct from heaven, through our Lord Jesus Christ, so that I might well have subscribed myself, as henceforth I intend to do, His servant and Evangelist.'

Luther informed the Elector in this letter that he had left the Wartburg and was going back to Wittenberg where his presence was needed owing to the revolutionary excitement that had arisen in consequence of the new evangelical preaching.

CHAPTER III

REVOLUTIONARY AGITATION IN ERFURT AND WITTENBERG —BEGINNINGS OF THE SPLIT IN THE CHURCH. 1521–1522

THE first revolutionary disturbances, after the Diet of Worms, took place at Erfurt in June 1521. Luther's friend, the Augustinian monk Johannes Lange, by his seditious preaching, stirred up the populace of this town to hatred and violence against the clergy, and the town council itself made use of the riotous mob in its attacks on the privileges and property of the ecclesiastics. Armed bands of students, artisans, and peasants, and rabble of all sorts, demolished, in the course of a few days, more than forty parsonages; committed the most fearful depredations, unhindered by the magistrates; destroyed whole libraries; tore up all the documents and rent-rolls they could lay hands on in the law offices of the provosts of Santa Maria and St. Severus; and perpetrated deeds of violence of the worst kind. Many cases of murder also occurred, and even Maternus Pictoris, highly esteemed as he was by the university for his services in the humanist cause, did not escape the fury of the assassins. His murder was recorded in the following doggerel:—

> To the house of Maternus they came in wrath;
> Through the window backwards they pushed him forth;
> He lay in the street, alas! quite dead.
> The priests, I ween, were sore bestead.

The insurgents inflamed each other to the work of destruction with revolutionary songs.

> Break in pieces all that's there,
> Windows, benches, table, chair,
> Walls and railings everywhere!
> Work like men of sense bereft,
> That nothing in the house be left.

In another riot towards the end of July seven parsonages were set on fire.

After these events the University of Erfurt began to show signs of rapid decline. The number of its students sank to less than half, for many parents took their sons away to preserve them from the taint of Hussitism. Among those who were left riots and excesses of all sorts became the order of the day.

But, in spite of all the revolutionary tumults and disturbances, the ancient constitution of the Church remained intact at Erfurt, as, indeed, all over the Empire, until the autumn of 1521. The customary divine services were performed as usual, the services of the Holy Mass and the administration of the Sacraments underwent no alteration; there was as yet no idea of organising a new Church system.

Such a contingency, however, could not but follow eventually as the result of Luther's teaching of justification by faith alone, and of universal priesthood. If all Christians were priests before God there was no need of any hierarchical system; if good works were not necessary to salvation, ecclesiastical institutions and cloisters became superfluities, and all the worldly goods of the Church were equally useless. This evangelical liberty, thus ostentatiously proclaimed, required the removal of all such offensive anomalies, and inflamed multitudes with eagerness to escape from the crushing

slavery of cowl and cloister, prayers, fasts, and mortification, and filled them with desire to obtain a share in the rich possessions of lazy priests and the splendid church treasures of gold and silver chains, monstrants, and so forth.

In the town of Erfurt the final upheaval began in the autumn of 1521. Monks flocked mutinously from the cloisters—the Augustinians especially—and began openly preaching that people should adhere no longer to the religion of their fathers. The Old Testament, they declared, expressly enjoined the duty of forsaking the creed of their fathers; the Church of God had been nothing but a 'mother of human dogma, pride, avarice, luxury, faithlessness, and hypocrisy,' a workshop of lies and all that was evil. The Augustinian monk Lange called the cloisters 'free bandit castles.' One of these apostates insisted that the common people, every time they heard the Catholic Church even mentioned, should make the sign of the cross. All these preachers harangued most fiercely against the tyranny of the papacy, and declared that fasts and prayers, confession and absolution, monkhood and masses, were only human institutions, devised by the greed of 'oiled and tonsured priests.' Christian martyrs and Church Fathers of the first centuries were carried about in effigy and dragged in the mire; the chastity of a St. Franciscus and St. Dominicus was made the laughing-stock of the people. Ruffianly crowds showed their sympathy with the preachers by yelling and shouting in church. Theological questions were debated in market-places and taverns; men, women, and boys expounded the Bible.

The populace manifested its evangelical ardour by repeated risings.

'These are the fruits of Gospel-preaching,' wrote Luther's brother monk, and former tutor, Bartholomäus Usingen, 'that the people, after having renounced obedience to the Catholic Church, are now, under the cloak of Christian freedom, giving themselves up to the lusts of the flesh, throwing contempt on true piety, and rushing headlong into an abyss from which it will scarcely be possible ever to rescue them.'

Usingen was the most persistent defender of the old faith in Erfurt. In his cathedral preaching, and in his apologetic writings, he warned the people against the new false prophets. 'Under the guise of freedom and the Gospel,' he said, 'these men are destroying religion, discipline, and respectability; they are reviving the old Hussite anarchy; they are stirring up tumult and mutiny, and delivering over the Christian commonwealth to perpetual chaos.' Clerical reform of ecclesiastical living was certainly necessary, he said, but it was necessary above all in the case of those disorderly, runaway monks, who were posing as moral reformers and endeavouring to cover their own shame by wicked exaggeration of the abuses of the Church. It filled every honourable man with indignation that such people should presume to sit in judgment on the whole edifice of ancient church life, when they themselves were more in need of reform than any others. He declared it to be a disgrace to the name of 'German' that such proceedings should be allowed to go unpunished. Just as, in consequence of the Greek iconoclastic riots, the ancient splendour of Constantinople and the Roman imperial crown had passed over to the

German nation, so, he sadly predicted, the present German iconoclasts would bring about the downfall of Germany, and the loss of all her former greatness. Thousands flocked to hear his preaching, but it had little influence on the course of events in the town. The revolutionary party became all-powerful in Erfurt. For thirty years Usingen had ministered to the glory of the town and the university, and now he saw himself exposed helplessly to the scorn of the populace, whilst his life was scarcely safe. The majority of the town councillors ranged themselves on the side of the agitators and championed the new gospel, in order to emancipate themselves from the dominion of the detested Archbishop of Mayence, and to get into their own hands the rich possessions of the Church.

'These religious innovators have no fear of the Archbishop of Mayence,' wrote Carl von Bodmann to Rome; 'on the contrary, they hope that he, and others with him, will gradually come round to their side; and that, for his own benefit, he will lend a helping hand when the projected diminution of Church territory is effected. As for the Worms edict against Luther and his adherents, since the Emperor's departure from the country nothing, or as good as nothing, has been done to carry it into effect. Even in some of the episcopal towns Luther's books are sold freely and openly, and the imperial edict has become pretty much a joke among the people.' In another letter he says: 'Pamphlets and treatises which assail and vilify the Church and the clerical body are devoured with famine voracity, whereas only a very few of the bishops take any trouble to supply the people with orthodox literature on the subject, or to instruct them by sermons

concerning the peril the Church is in from these heretical teachers. Luther's partisans are even to be found in the private council chambers of many of the bishops. Everything and everybody seems paralysed with fear at the present convulsed state of affairs.'

The wavering uncertain attitude of many of the great ecclesiastical dignitaries, especially the Archbishop of Mayence, Primate of Germany, did undoubtedly do much to develop the revolutionary character of these religious innovators.

Albrecht had from the beginning acted a double part with regard to this movement, and the papal Nuncio, Aleander, had good grounds for his repeated complaints concerning the Archbishop and the unorthodox following he gathered round him. Even whilst the papal and imperial bans were hanging over Luther, he sent word to the latter that he was on his side and would protect him; that he himself had thought of 'taking the lead in this Gospel cause, only in a safer and more suitable manner.' Intimidated by Hutten and his partisans, he had not signed the Edict of Worms, as he ought to have done as Imperial Chancellor, and in his dioceses of Mayence, Magdeburg, and Halberstadt he did all in his power to hinder public proceedings against Luther. His court preacher and Privy Councillor, Wolfgang Capito, who was in favour of the new religious teaching, praised him in a letter to Zwingli of August 4, 1521, as a promoter of the 'Evangel;' the Archbishop, he said, would not allow Luther to be spoken against from the pulpits; and just lately he had dismissed the provincial of the Order of Minorites, who had attempted to preach against Luther in the dioceses

of the Rhine Provinces. 'However,' Capito continued, 'Luther's adherents are splitting into several parties; a new sect of sophists is arising, and in their hands everything becomes either matter of doubt, or material for empty disputation, or fuel for insurrectionary tumult; this is especially the case with the runaway monks, and a large proportion of the people are turning from them in consequence.'

At the end of September 1521 Capito and Henry Stromer, physician in ordinary to the Archbishop, went to Wittenberg to interview Melanchthon and induce him to try and persuade Luther to moderate his personal vehemence, and to treat Albrecht with consideration and forbearance. Luther, they said, by judicious reserve, might gain over those whom he could not overcome by violence. Melanchthon answered that it was not his business to influence Luther. He knew well how the world judged the latter, how some thought him a bad man, others a lunatic; he for his part believed that Luther was proclaiming the Gospel by inspiration of God. 'Concerning sacred things,' said Melanchthon in the course of his speech, 'we understand only as much as the Spirit reveals to each of us.' As to the Archbishop of Mayence, he would spare him as much as possible, in order that he might not proclaim outlawry and the ban.

Consistently with his other underhand dealings Albrecht had not the moral courage to protest decidedly against the innovations; he was forced to bow before Luther, 'the primate before the excommunicated monk,' who threatened him with disclosures. Already in 1522 Carl von Bodman had expressed his fear that Albrecht

[1] Melanchthon's letter in the *Corp. Reform.* i. 462.

contemplated taking to himself a wife, transforming the archbishopric of Mayence into a secular principality, and throwing it open to Luther's 'Evangel.' The Wittenberg professor Carlstadt concluded a pamphlet with the joyful tidings that the German Primate was coming round to the evangelical truth, and that there was reason for hoping that other bishops would join with him in throwing off the Roman yoke, and would rule their dioceses themselves independently of the Pope's appointment and confirmation. Capito reckoned up, in praise of Albrecht, the number of those who in the year 1523 had preached the 'Evangel' unhindered in the towns and lordships of Mayence.

Meanwhile disturbances of the same nature as those at Erfurt had broken out in Wittenberg.

On October 6, 1521, the Augustinian monk Gabriel Zwilling, called Didymus, told the students assembled in the monastery that the adoration of the Eucharist was idolatry, and that nobody must any longer attend the service of the Mass; for the Body and Blood of Christ were not a sacrifice, but only a sign of the forgiveness of sins.

'We do not yet know what will happen,' wrote a young student to a friend from the 'most Christian town' of Wittenberg' on October 19, 'but this much is certain, that we shall communicate in both kinds, though the Pope and all his crew should burst in consequence. Do you suppose Melanchthon lied when he said in the public lecture-hall: "I believe that we shall gain this much, and receive the Sacrament in both kinds"?' 'To-day' (October 23), 'writes another student, 'the Augustinians have abolished the Mass. Carlstadt started a discussion on the subject and proposed that a

sermon should first be preached against the abuse of the Mass, and that then the parishioners of Wittenberg should meet in a body and give their sanction to its abolition; otherwise the preservation of Christian fellowship would be in danger. The monks, however, opposed the suggestion, saying that it was above all things needful to keep in view the danger in which the faith stood, and that with the abolition of the Mass the faith too would be extinguished. The matter was finally brought before Melanchthon, who declared himself to be in agreement with Carlstadt concerning the adoration of the Sacrament, because one was bound to believe Christ, no matter where he be. If St. Paul had entirely abolished circumcision among the Corinthians, why should not the mass be abolished? The Augustinians, he said, were supported by good precedents. On Carsltadt's motion that time should be allowed for bringing into operation the measure of abolition Melanchthon answered: 'Enough has been preached about it here in Capernaum; what do you mean by clinging thus to ceremonies? The monks have Christ on their side; let the Pharisees rage if they will.' It was not necessary, he said, to refer this matter to the civic authorities, as Carlstadt suggested; 'he who had put his hand to the plough must not draw back.' On November 12 the Augustinian prior, Conrad Hett, complained to the Elector of Saxony that some of the monks had forsaken the monastery, were turning their Order into ridicule among the burghers and the students, and were inciting lewd fellows against himself and the other monks, so that the destruction of the monastery was hourly to be feared.

A few weeks later a band of students from Erfurt

and Wittenberg forced their way into the parish church with naked knives, drove the priests from the altar, and pelted them with stones, shouting out that the altars must be thrown down and gibbets and gallows made out of the stones; that the office of hangman was more useful than that of an idolatrous priest; that except at the risk of perdition, nobody would attend Mass again.

Carlstadt—'in order,' as he said, 'by his example to rescue many poor, miserable, lost, deluded priests from the captivity of the devil'—now determined to enter into the state of matrimony, 'to which God had destined his priests.' In the presence of Melanchthon and many other professors of the university he was betrothed on December 26, 1521, to the fifteen-year-old daughter of a poor nobleman, and gave notice of a great wedding festival to be celebrated, whereat Luther expressed his delight. The prior of the castle, Justus Jonas, also announced to his friend Capito that he was thinking of taking a wife, and begged him to see to it that the Archbishop Albrecht took no measures against a 'beginning' which God Himself had manifestly initiated and sanctioned. 'I have nothing to say against your Lord Archbishop,' he writes, 'for merely "winking in silence at our proceedings," as you lately said to us, 'but I would rather that the Princes openly confessed the Christ of the Holy Scriptures.' 'Do thou never forget that God's Word is apt to be abused and mocked at; but forget for a while *that* on account of which thou hast so often recommended and preached moderation to me; for it is as if God Himself, as in the time of Christ, were now visibly inflaming the people with a sudden outpouring of the Holy Ghost.'

In a more extraordinary manner even than at Wittenberg did this so-called spirit of God manifest itself in the town of Zwickau. New prophets, chiefly of the artisan class, arose there, 'called by God,' and under the leadership of the preacher Thomas Münzer, and the cloth-weaver Nicholas Stock they declared that they were going to establish a new kingdom of Christ in place of the old one, which was falling to pieces. In this new kingdom there was to be no outward form of worship, no outward fabric of law, and no secular authority; all men were to be equal, all property held in common; all were to be priests and kings alike. Twelve apostles and twenty disciples were to be chosen, whose lord and master Münzer was to be. A serious mutiny would have ensued if the town council had not been beforehand with them. Fifty-five journeymen weavers were shut up in the tower; but the leaders escaped. Among the latter were Münzer and Storch.

Storch, with two associates, repaired to Wittenberg to proclaim his new gospel there. These prophets entered the town on December 27, 1521, the day after Carlstadt's betrothal. They informed the populace that all the priests would be put to death, even though they should have married, so that in a short time—say five, six, or seven years—the world would be so completely changed that no impious or wicked sinner would be left alive. These men pointed to Holy Scripture as the source of their enlightenment, just as Luther and his followers had done. Only what was plainly commanded in the Bible must be allowed to remain; therefore infant baptism must be abolished as being diametrically opposed to the words of the Saviour,

'Whoso believeth and is baptised.' Furthermore, Holy Writ, as a dead letter, has no longer any value; God and the Holy Spirit reveal all truths and all commandments to believers in visions.'

These 'prophets' made a deep impression on Melanchthon, to whom they gave a full account of their 'special, undoubted, direct communications from God.' He had no doubt whatever that they were possessed by spirits, but he was of opinion that Luther should be called on to decide as to the nature of these spirits. The prophets, on the other hand, said that Martinus was generally right, but not in all points; there would come another after him with a still greater spirit.' Melanchthon in his extremity turned to the secular ruler, the Elector Frederic of Saxony, 'who,' he said, 'as a Christian Elector, and at this time the only champion of the Church, was a fit person to act in such matters, especially in the question of the baptism of children.' 'These questions about baptism,' Melanchthon wrote to him, 'have shaken me in my opinions.' Melanchthon took into his house one of these prophets, who had had a liberal education, and gave him several children to instruct. Meanwhile the prophets preached about the new empire in public assemblies and tried their utmost to connect themselves with Carlstadt.

Carlstadt, who began with hesitation but soon became one of the most daring of the innovators, had already instituted a new form of Communion service; and in a pamphlet on the 'Cleansing of the Churches' he advocated iconoclasm. 'Images are an abomination,' he said, 'and it follows, therefore, that we also are abominable if we take pleasure in them. Our temples

may justly be called murderers' dens, for our souls are killed and ruined in them. It is the Devil who rewards the popes who have thus killed and destroyed us.' 'It would be a thousand times better if the images were in hell fire, or in a fiery furnace instead of in the houses of God. Carlstadt knew full well that the people neither worshipped the images nor reverenced them for their own sakes, but nevertheless they were all to be carried off by force and destroyed. 'If any one,' he wrote, 'ventured to say, "I do not pray to the images; I do not reverence them for themselves, but for the sake of the saints whom they represent," God would answer briefly and plainly: "Thou shalt not pray to them, thou shalt not worship them."' 'If any should say, "Pictures teach and instruct the unlearned as books do the learned," you must answer him: "God has forbidden me to use pictures; therefore I will learn nothing from them." If another comes and says, "Pictures remind us of the sufferings of our Lord, and often cause people to repeat a Pater Noster, or to think of God, who otherwise might never think of Him, and never pray to Him," you must answer such an one: "God has forbidden pictures." No excuse will avail, though you should repeat a thousand times over: "I do not worship them for their own sakes, but for the sake of what they represent."'

The magistrates, Carlstadt said, had the right—indeed, it was their duty—to remove the pictures and images from the churches. 'Would to God that our rulers resembled the pious kings and rulers of Judea! They are authorised, indeed, by Holy Scripture to superintend the Churches, and to remove whatsoever may be a hindrance and a stumbling-block to

believers. 'The magistrates also had the right to compel and coerce the priests in this matter; for the latter were by divine law subject in all things to the magistracy. But they ought not to wait till the priests of Baal themselves removed their temples and images; the chief secular power should command and enforce.'

Carlstadt spoke to the same effect in the sermons which he preached before crowded audiences. Of these an eye-witness wrote as follows: 'Those who formerly went seldom or never to hear a sermon, now never miss one.' In conjunction with Gabriel Zwilling Carlstadt urged the community to all sorts of arbitrary changes in religious worship; denounced confession as a devilish device of papal tyranny, and the Pope and bishops as the Devil's vicars and messengers. In January 1522 he broke into the churches at the head of a riotous gang, tore down altars and crucifixes, trampled under foot the pictures of the saints, pelted the clergy in the streets with stones, and threatened to storm the Barefoot Monastery.

Duke George of Saxony bestirred himself energetically in this matter, and addressed urgent appeals to his relatives, the Elector Frederic and Duke John, brother of the Elector, concerning the proceedings at Wittenberg.

On November 16, 1521, he drew attention to the fact that 'matters in Saxony were, in his opinion, becoming as serious as they had been in Bohemia, where their forefathers had fought to the death for the preservation of the faith. There were already some people now in Saxony who had put away all religion, and who denied the immortality of the soul.

All this was the result of Luther's teaching. He could not sufficiently lament that such a state of things should have come about in Wittenberg, the first city in the Electorate. He entreated Duke John to prevail on his brother to punish these innovators, or at any rate to declare himself against them; he (George) was all the readier with counsel and help, seeing that the moon was now in the last quarter, as was plainly to be seen by 'hair and beard.'

In his letter George repeatedly urged the Hussite disturbances as a warning. In Bohemia also churches and cloisters had been plundered; let them only consider the condition in which the Church now stood in that country; the clergy had sunk to such a depth of poverty that they were looked upon with utter contempt, so much so that hangmen and usurers had been appointed to clerical office; the population was split into sects, the faith almost stamped out or degraded to old wives' fables. Let the Elector consider how things stood at the present moment in his own country. In Wittenberg a new ritual had been introduced; in Eilenburg an attack had been made on the house of the clergyman; a man had actually ridden into the church on a donkey; altars and pictures were being destroyed; monks were deserting the cloisters; priests were taking to themselves wives. He did not know how he could defend the Elector against the reproaches of those who laid on him the blame of all these crimes, for he who does not prevent evil is as much to blame as he who commits it. God had given the House of Saxony great treasures, the Duke went on to say, but since Luther's proceedings had begun they had had but little luck with the mines. Morals too were being corrupted.

These agitators falsely boasted that they had resuscitated the Gospel; he had been acquainted with the Gospel now for forty years, and a much better one, indeed, than that which was now being hawked about.

In the town of Eilenburg, alluded to by Duke George, Gabriel Zwilling had been the leader of sedition. 'The Wittenberg renegade monk,' an eye-witness wrote concerning him, 'has set himself up to preach; he wears a student's gown, and a shirt with a black border, and a biretta of marten-skin with two ear-lappets. He has the greatest contempt for the Holy Mass, and also for good works, and he preaches that there are only two ways: one is narrow and leads to heaven, and is *faith*; the other is wide and leads to hell, and is made up of good works, masses, prayers, fasting, almsgiving, and penance. He says, moreover, that we are not subject to any law, but that laws are subject to us, and that no one should be compelled to confess or to be baptised.' After the sermon the Communion was celebrated in the castle church on the mountain. Zwilling repeatedly impressed on his hearers that it was not necessary to confess before receiving the Sacrament, and also that it might be received after eating. 'The communicants,' the narrator goes on, 'went up to the altar almost laughing, and amongst them were even some who, to my knowledge, had spent the night before in rioting and fornication.'

But in all that they did the new evangelists believed themselves to be following the Word of God. When the Elector Frederic sent remonstrances through an emissary to the iconolast Carlstadt, the latter justified himself, as Luther was wont to do, on the plea of a

special mission from heaven. 'The Word was borne in upon me,' he said, 'with sudden swiftness; woe is me if I do not preach it.' Discord and divisions had arisen because all men did not follow the Holy Scriptures; he himself followed them implicitly, and no fear of death should make him swerve from them: he should hold fast to the sense of God's Word and not let himself be led into error by what others taught; besides, none were offended by his preaching but those who were not Christians.'

Following the example of the 'prophets' of Zwickau, Carlstadt declared open war on all liberal studies, and demanded the abolition of all schools and the suspension of Doctors' degrees. Laymen and artisans were to be appointed preachers of the new evangel; students were not to lose any more time in study, but were to learn some trade or handicraft. The number of his followers went on increasing. The revolution party triumphed at Wittenberg as it had done at Erfurt; here, as there, the university was deserted. 'Nearly all the most learned and distinguished men,' wrote Spalatin, 'are grievously distressed.' Each of these new evangelists had his own peculiar method. 'They proceeded so strangely and in such diverse ways,' we read in a letter of the Elector Frederic's, 'that all sorts of sects grew up, and everybody was bewildered and no one knew who was cook and who scullion.'

In the midst of this dilemma Luther, who had been kept accurately informed at the Wartburg of all that was doing, appeared suddenly at Wittenberg. He preached eight sermons there in 1522, in which he traced the 'desolation of abomination' to a 'misappre-

hension of Christian liberty.' In view of the outrages perpetrated he laid down the following maxim in reference to the Epistle of St. James and other Scripture passages which he had rejected: 'Faith without love is nothing worth; yea, it is not faith but only a semblance of it.' What had been done in Wittenberg had been done in an irregular manner and 'with wrong to one's neighbour.' 'You should first have brought the matter in earnest prayer before God, and secondly before the magistrates, and then it would have been known to have proceeded from God.' It grieved him sorely that they had acted without his orders and cooperation. 'Follow me,' he said, claiming for himself immediate inspiration from God; 'I was the first whom God entrusted with this matter; I was also the one to whom God first revealed how His Word should be preached to you. Therefore you have done wrong in starting such a piece of work without my sanction and help, and without having first consulted me.'

He reproved them most severely of all for the way in which they had desecrated the holy altar of the Sacrament. 'The other offences,' he said, 'might be forgiven, but this was unpardonable. You have acted so outrageously in this that people say: "Yes, there are good Christians in Wittenberg; for they take the sacramental chalice in their hands, and fill it with brandy and drink themselves dead drunk."'

The Wittenberg Gospel had not yet by any means gained favour among the people of Saxony, as is testified by a letter of the Polish ambassador Johannes Dantiscus, who paid Luther a visit at Wittenberg in 1523. 'I did not reach the place,' he writes, 'without delays and difficulties, for the rivers, especially the Elbe, which

flows past Wittenberg, were so swollen that in the lowlands all the seeds had floated to the surface. From the country folk I had time therefore for observations by the way, and I heard a good deal of reviling and anathematising of Luther and his associates. It seemed to be the general opinion that it was because most of these innovators had eaten meat all through the fasting seasons that God was now visiting the land with a flood.' Much stronger evidence even of the popular dislike of the new gospel is found in an official document of Melanchthon's, in which he gives the following answer to the question whether it is permissible for the Elector of Saxony to go to war in support of the new evangel. 'No,' he says, 'for it is certain that the feelings and opinions of his subjects are not in favour of a war for the sake of the gospel; for they have no faith and are not Christians. Therefore the Prince must not go to war; for he is prince of a heathen people—that is, of unbelievers.'

The Catholics, in Melanchthon's opinion, as well as in Luther's, were altogether heathens or infidels.

That the Devil had played him such a trick as this through the instrumentality of Carlstadt and the new prophets of Wittenberg, Luther regarded as a punishment for what he considered his too cringing behaviour at Worms. In a pamphlet against King Henry VIII. of England in 1522 he said: 'It grieves me that I so far lowered myself before the Emperor at Worms as to allow judges to pronounce on my teaching, and that I listened when they pointed out errors to me; for I ought not to have exhibited such insane humility when all the while I knew I was right, and did not mean to yield to the tyrants.'

From which it appears that Luther openly designated the Emperor a tyrant.

In the same pamphlet he calls himself 'by the grace of God *Ecclesiastic* of Wittenberg,' who has not only received his teaching direct from heaven, but also is retained by one who with his little finger can do more than a thousand popes, kings, princes, and 'doctors.' He proceeds to declare that he shall hold eternally by all the points of his teaching, which he enumerates seriatim, and shall always maintain that 'whoever teaches differently from what I have laid down here, or condemns me for any part of my doctrine, condemns God and is branded as a child of hell.' 'All the papists in the world,' he said, 'lumped together know less what faith and good works are than a goose knows about the Psalter.' Through the clear writing of God's grace he had discovered that papacy, monkhood, nunhood, masses, church services, bishoprics, abbeys, cloisters, and universities were all accursed inventions of the Devil. 'I should not have said that the pontificate is a worse plunderer than Nimrod; for nearly all sovereignties are of God's ordinance, as was Nimrod's; I should have said: "The papacy is the most hideous abomination of the Devil of devils that ever was seen on earth."' King Henry, he called a frantic madman, a lubberly ass, a striking confirmation of the saying: 'There are no bigger fools than kings and princes.'[1]

In a letter to the knight Hartmut von Cronberg, in March 1522, in which he complains of the trick

[1] Answer to King Henry VIII.'s book against Luther's treatise on the Babylonish Captivity (*Collected Works* of Luther), 28, 343-387. See especially pamphlet, 351, 346-347, 349-351, 380, 383.

played him at Wittenberg, he says: 'All my enemies put together, with all the whole gang of devils, however hard they have often hit me, have never injured me as I have now been injured by my friends; and I must acknowledge that the smoke of it has made my eyes smart sorely, and stung my heart not a little. Well, well, I often think it is perhaps a punishment for my behaviour at Worms . . . because, for the sake of good friends, and that I might not seem to them too obstinate, I subdued my spirit and did not make my protest before the tyrants more strongly and uncompromisingly . . . I have often repented of my humility and subservience at Worms.' The sentence pronounced on his teaching at Worms had, he said, been a sentence on divine truth itself, and this sin was being visited on the whole German nation. 'You are aware,' he writes, 'that the sin committed at Worms, when the divine truth was so childishly rejected, so publicly, audaciously, deliberately, and unjustly condemned, was a sin of the whole German nation, because it was the act of the heads of the country, and nobody opposed them. Thereby God has been beyond measure sinned against, so much so that either He has wholly taken away from the land His precious Word, or has allowed things to come to such a pass that none now believe it to be God's Word, but are suffered to revile and persecute, as doctrines of the Devil, that which in the wickedness of their hearts they dared to deny and condemn. Alas! alas! my dear Hartmut, the German nation has brought this reward on itself by the service they rendered the Pope at that unholy Diet.' The nation, he said, had again and again condemned the Gospel, and he feared the same would happen to

Germany as was written in the Book of Kings; 'they had killed their prophets so long that God gave them over to a reprobate mind and there was no longer any help for them.' 'And if they have not shed my blood it has not been for want of will, and they murder me incessantly in my heart. Poor lost nation, must thou then hasten before all others work as the gaoler and hangman of Antichrist against the saints and prophets of God?' 'See how my words gush forth and run away with me,' he writes at another time. 'That is the doing of the Christian faith, which has shed itself in joy for your conversion and blessed confession. Greet all our friends in the faith, the knights Franz von Sickingen and Ulrich von Hutten, and any others of you who may be there.'

Seeing how much was execrable in the papacy, it was no wonder Luther said that 'there should be some who will not treat our gospel rightly; but have we not gibbets, wheels, swords, and knives? Those who are obdurate can be brought to reason. But in spite of all the offences of his own party, and attacks of all the papists, all spiritual and secular rulers would in due time have to succumb before his gospel, all kings to bow down and worship. 'I am terribly afraid,' he wrote to the Elector of Saxony, 'that God intends to punish the country by some great rising of the people. For we see that this new gospel suits the common people admirably, only they receive it in a carnal sense; they see the truth of it, but they will not understand it in the right manner. Moreover those who ought to put down the disturbances actually encourage them, attempt to extinguish the light by force, and do not see that, by so doing they only embitter

the hearts of the people and incite them to tumult, while they themselves have the appearance of wishing that they or their children should be destroyed, which consummation God without doubt will send as a curse.' 'The spiritual tyranny has been weakened, and that is all that I aimed at with my writing: but now, behold, God means to push things further, as He did with Jerusalem and her two kingdoms. It has been revealed to me lately that not the spiritual powers only, but also the temporal ones, will have to succumb to the Gospel, either through love or through force, as is clearly proved by all biblical history. And though at first I did not apprehend a national rebellion, but thought only of a revolt against the priesthood, I fear now that the disturbances may begin against the ruling powers and spread like a plague to the priesthood.'

'The firstfruits of victory are ours,' he writes to Wenzel Link a few days later in a letter of March 19, 1522, 'and we are triumphing over the papal tyranny, which formerly crushed kings and princes; how much more easily then shall we not overcome and trample down the princes themselves!'

His especial wrath was directed against Duke George of Saxony, who, in fulfilment of the injunctions of the Edict of Worms, was waging bitter war against Luther and his adherents, and urging other princes to a similar course. 'If the princes go on being guided by that donkey's pate of a Duke George, I very much fear that they will land us in a revolution which will put an end to princes and magistrates all over Germany, and swallow up the whole of the clergy as well. It seemed to him that he already saw Germany

swimming in blood. The nation was no longer what it had hitherto been; the princes ought to realise that the sword of civil war was most surely hanging over their heads.' He (Luther) was very far from fearing them: the ruin of which they sang was for them, not for him. Such of the clergy as did not come over to his gospel he declared to be outside the pale of law and justice. 'As I told you,' he wrote at the beginning of May 1522 to the burgomaster and town council of Altenburg concerning the canons of the place, 'the Canons Regular must forfeit their authority if they oppose the Gospel, and must be shunned and fled from like wolves.' 'God himself,' he said in a letter to the Saxon Elector, 'has annulled all authority and all power which works in opposition to the Gospel'; 'therefore the council of Altenburg owes it to your Electoral Grace to restrain false preachers, or at least to assist in appointing an orthodox one. No seals, or letters, or customs, or privileges can avail them; they must be forcibly compelled. And neither seals, privileges, custom, nor authority can withstand force. I have pointed out to them often enough that they have power and right to distinguish and pronounce judgment between true and false teaching, and that everywhere the Canons Regular are losing their privileges, power, authority, and their right to farm-rents, because they publicly oppose the Gospel.'

'It is not injustice,' he said in like manner to Count Johann Heinrich von Schwarzburg, 'indeed, it is the highest justice, that we should drive the wolf out of the sheepfold, without caring whether his belly bursts in consequence. Lands and tribute money are not given to preachers in order that they may work

evil, but that they may make people pious. 'If they do not make people pious'—that is, if they do not preach the Lutheran gospel—'they must forfeit their possessions.'

Luther was above all eager to have the biggest wolves, viz. the bishops, turned out of the sheepfold, and in a pamphlet against the 'Falsely so-called Spiritual Estate of the Pope and Bishops' he fervently exhorts 'all dear children of God and true Christians to co-operate towards this end.'

This contemplated expulsion of the bishops, however, meant at the same time a complete overthrow of the imperial constitution, for the bishops were not only spiritual overseers, but, for the most part, reigning princes of Germany as well.

In the above pamphlet, under the style and title of 'by the grace of God *Ecclesiastic* of Wittenberg,' Luther took his stand on the proposition that his teaching alone could ensure salvation, and that on the strength of this he was authorised to pronounce judgment on the bishops. He vaunted himself that he would not have judgment pronounced on his doctrine by any one, not even by all the angels. 'For inasmuch as I know for certain that I am right, I will be judge above you and above all the angels, as St. Paul says, that whoever does not accept my doctrine cannot be saved. For it is the doctrine of God, and not my doctrine; therefore my judgment also is God's, and not mine. While I am alive I will leave you no peace; if you kill me you shall have ten times less peace, for I will be unto you, as Hosea says, a bear in the way and a lion in the street. Whatever you do with me you shall not have your wicked will until your brazen foreheads and

iron necks have been broken either with or without grace.'

'Verily,' he begins, 'there are many well-disposed people who do not consider that I am going too far because I attack the great lords; and if, as the tyrants themselves expect, there is likely to be disturbance and insurrection, I must show cause beforehand, and prove it in writing, that it is not only just but also necessary to punish the exalted heads.'

The preaching of all prophets, and that of the Saviour himself, he said, had generally been directed chiefly against kings, princes, priests, learned men, and rulers of the people. The Christ of the Gospel was quite a humble, lowly person, in no high position or office. But on whom did he pronounce judgment? Whom did he punish except the High Priests, the learned Scribes and Pharisees, and all the great ones of the earth? And thereby he has left an example for all preachers that with good courage they may attack the high and mighty ones, since the ruin or the welfare of the nation lies chiefly in their hands. Why then should we follow the senseless Pope's fool's laws in face of the example of Christ and all the prophets, and abstain from punishing the great grandees and the spiritual tyrants? And what gain would there be in letting the rulers go and punishing the people? No amount of good teaching will ever be able to clear out as much evil as the iniquitous rulers put in with false teaching.'

The bishops and other ecclesiastical dignitaries, moreover, must be punished much more severely than the secular powers; and this for two reasons: first, because ecclesiastical greatness does not proceed from

God, who does not recognise the humbugging crew of bishops; nor does it rest on human authority, but it has grown up of itself and set itself up in authority against God and man: secondly, because the secular powers, although they may be unjust and pernicious, nevertheless only injure the body; but spiritual rulers, when they are not holy and do not carry on God's work, are wolves and murderers of souls, and it is just as bad as if the devil himself were set up to rule. Hence it is just as needful to protect oneself against bishops who do not teach God's word as against the devil. For where God's Word is not, there assuredly are devil's doctrines and soul murders, since without God's Word the soul cannot live or be saved from the devil.

By 'God's Word' Luther of course always meant his own interpretation of Scripture, his own doctrine, which, as he prided himself, had been revealed to him by God.

'If, however,' he goes on, 'you say that a mutiny against the ecclesiastical rulers is to be dreaded, I answer: Shall God's Word on that account be set aside and the whole world be ruined? 'It would be better that all bishops were murdered, all abbeys and cloisters razed to the ground, than that one soul should perish. One soul, did I say? that all men's souls should be lost for the sake of those senseless mummies and idols. Of what use are they except to live in luxury on the sweat and labour of others, and to hinder the Word of God? You are afraid of an insurrection which may harm your bodies, but you care nothing for spiritual destruction. Are they not wise and excellent people? If they truly accepted God's

Word and sought the salvation of the soul, God would be with them, who is a God of peace, and there would be no tumult to be feared. It is not God's Word that causes tumult, and if they will not listen to God's Word, but storm and rage with bans, and fire and murder, and all kinds of evil, what can more justly befall them than a violent upheaval which shall root them out of the earth? And one could but mock and laugh, if it should happen, according to what divine wisdom says: "Ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof; therefore I also will laugh at your calamity and I will mock when your fear cometh."'

In the face of such utterances as these one cannot attach much meaning or importance to other passages in which Luther says that he by no means wished to proceed to force; that the Antichrist must be destroyed without carnal warfare. 'God's Word did not cause violence, but the stiff-necked disobedience which resisted that word; let this disobedience be punished as it deserves.'

In his descriptions of the bishops he says, amongst other things: 'Who are they who live, shut up there, like brute beasts? Who are they whom no one dares punish, no one dares restrain? Does nobody know that bishoprics, abbeys, cloisters, universities are comfortable homes in which the goods of princes and of people of all sorts are collected, while (*sic*) the so-called owners possess in reality nothing? They think themselves altogether the most precious jewels of Christendom, but St. Peter calls them "spots and blemishes." They heap curses and maledictions on the truth, which they do not understand. They are altogether debauched, bestial, sensual, animal creatures, who have

never had a taste of spiritual existence. Attacks on them are not attacks on spiritual rulers. They are not bishops; they are ignorant mummies and dummies, hypocrites and jackanapes . . . wolves, tyrants, soul-destroyers, and apostles of Antichrist sent to ruin the world.'

'Do you say to me: "These people are too great, too high, too learned that you should attack them thus"? I answer: Christ, Peter, Paul, and the prophets have declared that no greater calamity can happen to the earth than that of Antichrist and the last evil.'

'Do you suppose that such words as those come only from goosequills and leaves of trees? God's Word speaks continually of great things, against great people. . . . But this is the conclusion of the matter. What signifies it, how great, how high, how numerous, how learned they be, if it be manifest that they are striving against God? Is God not more and greater than all things? The Turk too is great and mighty, but he is against God.' "Who is so bold," they say, "as to dare to call the Pope and the bishops and all their staff an accursed crew?" I answer: Peter, yea, the Holy Ghost through Peter calls them accursed. They are bishops, but not Christians, only thieves, plunderers, and adulterers; yea, archthieves, archplunderers, and archadulterers. Swine and cattle, sticks and stones are not so senseless as we have become under the Pope.' All this he is able 'to prove fairly and convincingly' out of Holy Writ. The cloisters 'are far worse than common brothels, taverns, and murderers' caves.'

Luther appended to this pamphlet a 'Bull of Reformation,' in which he proclaimed: 'All who help in the work, all who stake life, property, and honour

on having the bishops exterminated and their rule put an end to, they are dear children of God and true Christians; they hold to God's commandment and fight against the Devil's ordinances, or at any rate condemn or ignore them. On the other hand all who acquiesce in the government of the bishops and submit to them with willing obedience, they are the Devil's own servants, and resist God's ordinances and laws. Every single Christian must help with life and purse, that so this tyranny may be put an end to, and they must do heartily and with goodwill all they can to oppose them, as if it was the Devil himself they were fighting.' At the end he says: 'This is my (Dr. Luther's) Bull, which confers God's grace and reward on all who uphold it and follow it. Amen.'

To Spalatin, who had remonstrated with him on the violence of his language, Luther wrote on July 26, 1522, that it was with deliberate intention that he had spoken thus violently against the bishops, and that he would not spare them; if they had to suffer from insurrection and innovations, it would not be he who would have brought about these calamities, but their own tyranny and the decrees of destiny.

For the fulfilment of this destiny Franz von Sickingen, Luther's 'particular lord and patron,' stood ready equipped on the appearance of the pamphlet, which was, as it were, the declaration of war with which Franz heralded his campaign for the overthrow of the imperial constitution and for 'opening a way for the Gospel.'

CHAPTER IV

FRANZ VON SICKINGEN'S ATTEMPT TO OVERTHROW THE CONSTITUTION OF THE EMPIRE

Sickingen had returned from the campaign against France without military glory and without booty. He now, in the summer of 1522, thought the time had come to carry into execution the long-meditated plan of 'reorganising the constitution of the Empire.' The Emperor was absent in Spain, and the Imperial Council, which was opened at Nuremberg in September 1521, under the presidency of its Lieutenant-General, Count Palatine Frederic, was weak and little to be feared. Sickingen had good reason to hope for support in his undertaking among the nobility generally, for public affairs in the Empire were growing year by year more unfavourable for the lesser aristocracy of the country, whilst among the great nobles the discontent which had long been brewing had risen to savage fury. Shut out from all share in the affairs of the Empire, and deprived of one of their essential political privileges—the right of federation—the imperial nobility saw the existence of their order threatened by the growing power of the princes.[1]

They complained that the feudal oppression of the princes was becoming intolerable; fresh taxes were

[1] See our statements, vol. ii. p. 158.

continually imposed by them, and heavy grievances, scarcity, injustice of all sorts went on increasing. All attempts of the nobles to confer together over their wrongs or to hold meetings were prevented by threats or by violence, although in many parts they had had leagues and associations for the last two hundred years. On the other hand the electors, princes, and other estates of the realm, constantly organised themselves in special leagues—either secret or public—which, although the name of Imperial Majesty was always outwardly respected, undoubtedly fostered opposition and resistance to the Emperor, their liege lord, rather than obedience to him, and were also certainly detrimental to the general peace and welfare of the German nation. The nobility further complained that the most intolerable grievance they suffered from was the corrupt condition of the law courts: the lesser tribunals of the territorial lords no longer existed, so it would seem, for the purpose of administering justice, but only in order to guard the privileges of the ruling princes. Appeals against unjust sentences dictated by party-spirit were stultified in one territory by this or that nominal privilege or 'liberty,' in another by open force; if any noble wanted to bring any matter of dispute before the Imperial Council, or before the *Kammergericht*, he could scarcely find a single notary who dared to act according to his conscience. The higher courts were merely instruments for the most offensive tyranny of the strong over the weak. Even the Imperial Council in the execution of sentences stooped to all manner of partiality in favour of those in power, so that any advantage which the weaker side might have

with untold difficulty have gained was utterly useless. And even supposing the intentions of the Council to be good its executive powers were too slight to carry anything through in opposition to a large and influential majority. On this account the Imperial council was ill adapted to the maintenance of general peace throughout the Empire; it seemed best, therefore, always to leave the enforcement of any sentence entirely in the hands of the successful litigant, with liberty to use the help of an adequate armed force. All the Estates of the Empire, the nobles complained, whether spiritual or secular, were equally bent on their suppression; and they were, therefore, not going beyond their rights in revolting against this conspiracy and seeking to emancipate themselves from servitude, and in banding together for the recovery of their power and a reasonable footing in the land. All other classes were growing more and more affluent; the nobility alone were sinking lower and lower in poverty and degradation.

The inferior nobility had, in fact, in many districts lost the material basis of their political importance, in consequence both of the excessive subdivision of their hereditary possessions and of the luxurious extravagance of their expenditure, whereby the value of their landed property had become greatly reduced. Their own luxury, ostentation, and dissipation were largely to blame for the class degradation they complained of.

The many decayed and impoverished members of the aristocracy looked with envy and ill-favour on the wealthy cloisters and abbeys, and especially on the princely affluence of the archbishoprics and cathedral benefices. The efforts of so many of the spiritual lords to increase continually the already enormous possessions

of the Church, and their ostentatious display of wealth and superfluity, aggravated more and more the discontent of those even who, while lamenting the condition of affairs in Church and State, did not wish to separate from the Church and its teaching. Hence the scheme for what Hutten and Sickingen deemed the urgently needed restriction and partition of Church property found hosts of advocates and supporters, and was especially dear to those who considered it a lawful privilege of the aristocratic class to plunder proprietors as much as possible.

The institution of robber knights had reached really alarming dimensions in many provinces of the Empire, and, in spite of all regulations for public peace, was considered an honourable calling. When a Barefoot friar once said in a sermon that the highway-robbers ought to be caught and severely punished, and where necessary hanged on gallows in their boots and spurs, many Franconian nobles who were among the congregation were highly indignant with the monk; 'for they held,' says Zimmer's chronicle, 'that they are entitled by a pretended ancient privilege to commit robberies in the streets and take what belongs to others without let or hindrance.' One of those present, Schenk Ernst von Tautenberg, 'wanted to have the monk put to death.'

Even the near neighbourhood of Nuremberg itself, the seat of the Imperial Council, was thrown into consternation by Hans Thomas von Absberg, the leader of a gang of robber knights. In company with numerous associates he robbed and maltreated even needy artisans. In June 1522, for instance, he cut off the right hand of a coiner of Nuremberg, and it was in

vain that the poor man begged on bended knees that his left hand might be cut off instead and the right hand left him. On August 5 Hans Thomas and his murderous crew overtook a furrier and a cutler of Nuremberg in the neighbourhood of Baireuth. One of the robbers asked if they had not got a 'dissack' (a short Bohemian sword without a hilt), for he wanted to do a stroke of work; he had done nothing for so long. They hacked the furrier mercilessly with five successive strokes, and then cut off his right hand. The cutler too had his right hand cut off, and Hans Thomas sent both the hands to the burgomaster of Nuremberg with a message that he had still a hilt to his sword, which their victim would be made to bite, till his teeth fell out of his mouth, and fire burst forth from his eyes. He should deal in the same way with them all, he told the furrier, and he might tell this to his burgomaster.

Amongst Absberg's associates were Georg von Giech, Wolf Heinrich, and Hans Georg von Aufsess; and these robber knights actually found shelter in many of the feudal castles of the Margrave Casimir von Brandenburg.

Others who were scarcely less desperate than Von Absberg were Mangott von Eberstein, lord of Brandenstein, and the knight Von Rosenberg. Mangott's wife, Margaret von Rosenberg, often gave travellers the following advice at meals: 'If a tradesman does not keep his word to you, chop off his hands and feet and leave him by the wayside.' Sickingen also, for many years the terror of peaceful citizens, when in 1522 he was boasting that he 'would dare to do what no Roman emperor had ever yet dared,' counted among his supporters

men whose horses had been trained to bite people's knapsacks in the highways and streets.'

'I must get back to Sickingen as fast as possible,' wrote the preacher Martin Butzer from Strasburg to his friend Sapidus, 'for he wants to send me off again on a mission of the highest importance. He made me promise to go back to him as soon as possible, as he would probably want to send me to Saxony.' Butzer was a former Dominican monk whom the knight von Sickingen had often employed on 'evangelical missions.' 'Pray to the Lord,' he went on in the fashion which had come into vogue among preachers, 'that he would grant his protection to my knights, Sickingen and Hutten, who are inflamed with such zeal for the Gospel that they would joyfully sacrifice in its cause money and land and life. Their progress hitherto has been so satisfactory that if the Lord does not withdraw his favour from them we may well hope that the tyranny of the mighty ones may be overthrown. Let him do what is well-pleasing in his eyes. If I am not mistaken a great and universal upheaval is at hand, and prudent and careful people will not long be left asking whether they wish for it or not.'

Butzer was, in fact, sent to Saxony, and he wished that he could have stayed longer at Wittenberg in intercourse with Luther and Melanchthon. The instructions he was to carry out on this mission 'for the Gospel' have not transpired, but the object aimed at in this reorganisation of affairs for the benefit of the Gospel is plainly indicated by Sickingen's own utterances, as well as from those of his associates Hartmut von Cronberg and Ulrich von Hutten.

Hartmut, who was an enthusiastic adherent of both Sickingen and Luther, had already sent all sorts of missives and admonitory letters to the Pope and the Emperor, to the mendicant friars, to the confederates, and, amongst others, also to the Frankfort pastor Peter Meyer. He informed the latter that if he did not come round to the 'Gospel' it would be allowed to everybody to treat him, both in word and deed, as a rabid wolf, a spiritual thief and murderer. Of the Emperor the knight required that he should with the utmost courtesy represent to the Pope that he was the Devil's vicegerent, yea, Antichrist himself. And if the Pope, completely subject as he was to the Devil, would not acknowledge this, the Emperor had full right and liberty, in all innocence before God, to proceed against his Holiness with all his might, as against an apostate, a heretic, and an Antichrist. And to this end the Emperor might use the possessions of Antichrist, hitherto called ecclesiastical possessions, in order that the kingdom of Antichrist might be subdued and destroyed by its own sword.

If the Emperor delayed, and postponed the enterprise, Sickingen would start it. As a German Ziska he would punish the spiritual robbers with violence and murder; as a new Brutus he would put an end to the tyranny of princes and bishops. Hutten hoped that the German towns, in spite of all that they had suffered from the robber knights, would unite with the insurgent nobility, and fight with them for German freedom and the Gospel. In his 'Beklagung der Freistädte deutscher Nation' he appeals thus to the free cities to make common cause with the inferior nobility :—

Ye pious towns, your succour lend
The lesser nobles' case to mend;
Attach them to yourselves in trust;
Should you desert us, die I must.

You see we're trodden down, like you,
And crushed by haughty tyrants, who
Oppress all other classes and
Themselves alone exalted stand.

Good Dr. Luther's lore they dare
Forbid, as though it poison were.
And why? Because the holy truth
Agrees not with their ways, forsooth!

Then, pious towns, for war equip,
Secure the nobles' firm friendship,
And help the Allemanic nation
To save itself from degradation.

'If once the Word of God obtained dominion,' he said, 'the might of the princes would soon decay.'

Against none of the German princes did Sickingen cherish greater hatred than against Richard von Greiffenklau zu Vollraths, Archbishop of Treves, who at the Diet of Augsburg in 1518, whilst Sickingen was carrying on his raid against the Landgrave Philip of Hesse, and threatening Frankfort, had drawn emphatically attention to the danger from this freebooting knight. Sickingen, he said, was going rather too far in attacking first the towns and then the princes, one after the other. It was for the great lords, electors, and princes to consider what was likely to be the end of all this. The Archbishop on this occasion recommended severe measures against Sickingen, for which the latter never forgave him. Richard was, moreover, one of Luther's most powerful opponents, and a rumour had been set about during the meeting of the Worms Diet that the troops mustered by Sickingen were intended for an attack on the archbishopric of Treves.

Even before his return from the French campaign Sickingen had raised troops of *Landsknechts* against the Archbishop. At a large gathering of free Rhenish knights summoned by him at Landau, a 'Fraternal League' was organised on August 13, with Sickingen at its head, for the protection of the nobility; and with the help of this league he made ready for the onslaught. In order to win as many recruits as possible to his cause, he pretended that he was levying troops for the service of the Emperor. He did not scruple to display the banner of the Empire, and the Burgundian cross, in his ranks. From fear of these robber knights, who had for so many years levied contributions on the town of Worms without being punished, the town council of Strasburg made over to them a considerable sum of money, and before long some five thousand cavalry and ten thousand infantry were in the pay of the town.

In order 'to open to the Word of God the door which the Archbishop of Treves had done all in his power to close as firmly as possible' this army was to invade the Archbishop's territory. Among the chief officers of the forces were the Counts Eitelfritz von Zollern, Wilhelm and Friedrich von Fürstenberg, Wilhelm von Laufen, the knights Ulrich von Hutten, Hans Thomas von Rosenberg, Ludwig von Spät, and Johann Hilchen von Lorch. At the end of August Sickingen mustered his troops in the neighbourhood of Strasburg, and had the text, 'Lord, thy will be done,' fastened as a badge on the sleeves of the soldiers' uniforms. In a manifesto drawn up by the runaway monk Heinrich Kettenbach the Landsknechts were addressed as knights of Christ, armed against the

enemies of the Gospel, the bishops and priests; and the motto, 'All victory is from God,' which the Turks also wore on their sleeves, was illustrated by examples from the Bible. They were fighting with God, the summons declared; Sickingen was free from all motives of self-interest; he had no wish to enrich himself with land, or men, or money; on the contrary he was ready to sacrifice all he possessed, in order to fight for the glory of Christ against popes and bishops, those foes and destroyers of evangelical truth. The army was accompanied by fanatical preachers.

Thus for the first time on German soil a war of religion was declared; religion was used as a cloak for political and ecclesiastical plunder.

On the most empty pretexts Sickingen, on August 27, 1522, issued a declaration of war against the Archbishop, who 'had acted in opposition to God and the Imperial Majesty,' and a few days later he made a sudden raid into the archiepiscopal see, while waiting for reinforcements. He hoped by rapid action to seize the chief town of the diocese before the Archbishop could receive assistance from the princes in league with him—the Landgrave of Hesse and the Count Palatine Louis. After the capture of Treves he intended at once to march against Hesse. 'We are informed,' wrote the Landgrave Philip on September 2 to Count Michael von Wertheim, 'that Sickingen, when he has executed his designs against Treves, means at once to fall upon us.'

Sickingen's certainty of victory was so great that after the capture of the small fortified town of St. Wendel he revealed his plans openly to the nobles who had been taken prisoners: he told them that he con-

templated becoming 'Elector of Treves, and even more than this.' 'You are prisoners,' he said to these nobles. 'Your horses and your arms have been taken from you. But you have an Elector who can and will pay you well if he is able to hold out. But if Franz becomes Elector of Treves—and it is quite likely that he will succeed not only in this his least aim, but in much more also—he will indeed give you cause to rejoice, O captives.' It was not without reason and truth, therefore, that it was said of Sickingen that he had designated himself as the future King of the Rhineland and Duke of Franconia. In the lordship of Schaumburg he had received consecration in the name of the Emperor, and had then continued his march, setting fire to many places on the way, and appearing before Treves on September 8. In letters which he shot into the town he required the citizens to surrender, assuring them that he would protect their lives and property, and that he only claimed the possessions of the Archbishop, the priests, and the monks.

'Sickingen is encamped before Treves,' wrote the canonicus Carl von Bodmann, 'and there's a tremendous game at stake. He has numbers of friends in all parts, who wish to see the spiritual princes humbled and driven out, who are lusting after Church property, and who themselves, although they are laymen, exercise spiritual authority, and think that the parochial clergy and other ecclesiastical officers ought to be subject to them. If Sickingen's game succeeds we shall live to see a complete change in the Church system in many provinces of the Empire. The lower orders, everywhere incited to rebellion, hope to gain by this revolution and to shake off the oppression of the

ecclesiastical and secular lords. Sickingen's friends are stirring up the populace under the watchword of evangelical freedom, and preaching blood and destruction.'

'If Sickingen does not succeed in his enterprise against the Archbishop of Treves,' wrote the Bavarian chancellor, Leonhard von Eck, to his sovereign lord, Duke William, 'he will be a ruined man, and he will then lose his "faith" also. He knows that wherever he goes a hue and cry will be raised, that he will be pursued by the ban or beset by the Rhenish princes, and that there will be nothing left him but flight. To ward off such shame and disaster he will consider neither God, nor man, nor honour, but, on the contrary, will manœuvre in every possible way to raise the masses, as has hitherto been apprehended, from the news that comes daily to hand with threatenings of a *Bundschuh*.' The book of dialogues 'Neukarsthaus,' published by Sickingen's circle, had presupposed an alliance of the knights with the people. 'If a *Bundschuh* should be organised,' continues Eck, 'and the common people should get the upper hand, the Rhenish princes will have to pay for the breakfast, your Princely Highness and the other princes for the dinner, and the lesser nobles for the sleeping-cup. But perhaps it will be the will of God that the princes and the great "heads" should be punished; and it is truly an extraordinary thing that an invasion of an electorate should have been allowed and connived at by princes and other belligerents.'

Among the princes who not only tolerated but actually encouraged Sickingens' deeds of violence, Albert of Brandenburg, Archbishop of Mayence, was foremost.

It was cast in his teeth, indeed, that in the event of the success of Sickingen's undertaking against Treves he (Albert) intended to carry out his long-cherished plan of transforming the archbishopric of Mayence into a secular principality. It is, at any rate, an established fact, that he refused the Archbishop of Treves the help he asked of him against Sickingen; that when the Reichsregiment required him to arm against this violator of the peace he sent an evasive answer, and allowed Sickingen's troops, on their march to Treves, to cross the river in the Rheingau unhindered. Albert's highest official dignitaries and councillors, the Hofmeister Frowin von Hutten and the Marshal Caspar Lerch von Dirmstein, were in league with Sickingen, and instructed the Archbishop's general, Nickel von Minckwitz, to lead his troops by Cologne to join Sickingen.

As the Bavarian chancellor, Eck, had spoken unfavourably of Sickingen's undertaking against the princes, so now he made disparaging remarks on the Reichsregiment. 'It is very sick and feeble,' he said, 'and lies at its last gasp.'

The Council of Regency at least, as early as September 1, had summoned several of the Rhenish princes and towns to arm against Sickingen, who was stirring up 'tumult, war, and sedition in the Empire.' If serious steps were not taken to check his proceedings, it was greatly to be feared, the Council had declared, that his undertaking would not only do damage to the Archbishop of Treves, but grow in a short time to such dimensions that irreparable injury would accrue to the Estates of the realm, and to the whole commonwealth. On September 9, the day

after the commencement of the siege of Treves, an envoy from the Reichsregiment appeared in Sickingen's camp, and handed to him an injunction to abstain from his enterprise on penalty of the imperial ban and a fine of 2,000 silver marks. Nevertheless 'the highest authority of the realm was treated very improperly.' 'See here the Council's old fiddlers,' said Sickingen to the by-standers on receipt of the mandate, 'but the dancers are wanting; there's no lack of ordinances, but where are those that obey?' To the envoy of the Council himself Sickingen answered scoffingly in his own and his chief officers' names: 'He was to tell the Imperial Viceroy, and the other lords of the Council, that they need not disturb themselves, for he was a servant of the Emperor just as much as they were; he had no intention of proceeding against His Majesty, but only against the Archbishop of Treves, and he knew for certain that the Emperor would not be angry if he punished this priest a little, and took some of the sweetness out of those crowns which he had received from France for use against the Emperor.'

It was his intention to institute a better system of law than the Imperial Council had yet established, and to accomplish more than this august body had done. The *Kammergericht* at Nuremberg, to which the Council of Regency had referred him, was nothing to him; he had a council of wagons which settled matters with rifles and cartridges. With regard to his desire to secularise the spiritual principalities of Germany, he declared to the envoy that if he could get a following he would so manage that when Charles returned to the Empire he would find more land and

money there than he was seeking for elsewhere. He, Sickingen, wished to secure for himself a peaceful life as Archbishop of Treves, and he had no objection whatever to Archbishop Richard becoming a trooper. To compass this end he had entrenched himself before Treves. Another defiant speech of Sickingen's is reported as follows: 'He had begun this business for himself, and would carry it through in spite of the Emperor.'

'If I am not mistaken,' Spalatin wrote concerning Sickingen, 'this instigator of civil war means to be another Julius Caesar.'

Nevertheless the high-flying schemes of the knight were brought to nothing before Treves.

The Archbishop, 'a manly and courageous lord, and a skilful warrior,' defeated the whole enterprise by his resolute spirit and cool discretion. In spite of all the assaults of the besieging army the whole body of citizens stood loyally and devotedly by their liege lord. The town of Metz had sent powder and ammunition to the Archbishop; Cologne had also furnished him with powder; federated troops from Hesse and the Palatinate came to his assistance. Sickingen, on the contrary, did not receive the reinforcements he had been expecting; after five fruitless attempts at storming the city he was disabled by scarcity of powder; and in the districts ravaged by his robber bands the peasants had become exasperated. Therefore on September 14 Sickingen raised the siege and withdrew his forces, burning and plundering as he went. Churches, cloisters, whole villages, were ravaged and set on fire; 'the poor people with their little children were driven out of house and home,' says

an old chronicle, 'and treated in such a manner that the stones of the earth might have cried out in pity.' Laden with booty, Sickingen went back to his castles. According to the Archbishop's calculation, the damage done in his diocese amounted to the value of 300,000 gold gulden. The peaceful and defenceless inhabitants of the archbishopric had been the first to experience in Germany what was meant by a war undertaken in the name of religion, what it was 'to open up a way for the Gospel.'

Sickingen had succumbed to necessity, but his arrogance, and his confidence in the fortunate issue of his cause against the spiritual wolves and the tyranny of the princes in general remained undisturbed and undiminished. Hopes were still entertained that not only the whole of the nobility, but also all the towns in his neighbourhood, would attach themselves to him. 'You have never had better reason than now for giving your support to the nobles.' So Heinrich Kettenbach, author of Sickingen's war challenge against Treves, exhorted the free cities. 'If you array yourselves against the nobles you will injure not them only, but also the Gospel of Christ.' On October 10, 1522, Sickingen, with his friends and associates, was laid under the ban of the Empire, as a public violator of the *Landfried*. With supreme indifference to the edict, however, the irrepressible knight, at the end of the same month, burst into the Palatinate and plundered and devastated the town of Kaiserslautern, at the very time that the Bishop of Spires, brother of the Count Palatine Louis, was endeavouring to bring about an amicable settlement between the knight and the

confederate princes of Treves, Hesse, and the Palatinate. Sickingen sought and found accomplices in the Palatinate, in Suabia, and even in Bohemia, where Hartmut von Cronberg, whose property the allied princes had plundered, and the doctor of law, Knight Johann von Fuchstein, were active in his cause. This Fuchstein, who had filled the office of chancellor at the court of Count Palatine Frederick, 'was very skilful, but withal of a somewhat perverted mind,' says a trustworthy contemporary. 'With him right and justice were to be bought for money, and wherever he saw a chance of gain he could twist things as he pleased. Furthermore he had a bad reputation for infidelity in marriage and for fornication, but was none the less in favour with the princes, because he was so skilful with his tongue in justifying and exculpating crimes, so that many were deceived by him and held him for an honourable man, which, however, he was not.' He had been appointed assessor to the Reichsregiment by its president, Frederic, and being a follower of the Lutheran teaching he had worked with all his might for Sickingen in the Council. Letters in his handwriting were found addressed to Sickingen, to the effect that 'he was to be good cheer,' for the whole of the Reichsregiment was well affected towards him, and the time was now at hand when, by means of his enterprise, the haughtiness of the princes might be brought low, and the German nobility be freed from their unendurable yoke, and even grow up to the height of those who had domineered over them. Having been forced to fly from the country on account of his treachery, he wrote from Prague on January 1, 1523, after having received promises of help from the Bohemians, that it was the

wish of his heart to live and die with him to whom the tyranny of the nobles and their pomp and ostentation were obnoxious.

In Alsace, in the Sundgau, and in the Breisgau, the Counts von Fürstenberg and von Zollern levied troops for Sickingen; Bavaria also contributed recruits to the cause; and Sickingen even applied to the King of France for help in men and money.

While everybody was in terror as to coming events, Luther published on January 1, 1523, a pamphlet entitled 'On Secular Authority, and how far Obedience is due to it. These pages bristled with the most savage invectives against the princes who were inimical to his gospel, and who had forbidden the sale of his books and translations. 'God Almighty,' he said, 'has struck our princes with madness, so that they imagine they may treat and command their subjects just as they please; and the subjects too are crazy enough to think that it is their duty to obey all that is commanded them.' The princes had taken upon themselves to forbid the people certain books, to tyrannise over their consciences and their faith, and to tutor the Holy Ghost according to their maniacal notions. 'And inasmuch as the raging of such fools,' he goes on, 'tends to the ruin of the Christian faith, to denial of God's Word, and to blasphemy of the divine majesty, I can and will no longer wink at your proceedings, my ungracious lords and angry gentlemen, but must at least wage war on you with words. And if I have not been afraid of your idol, the Pope, who threatens to rob me of my soul and of heaven, I must let it be seen that neither do I fear his "shadows and water-bubbles," which threaten to take from me my body and the earth under my feet.'

'God grant that they may rage till the grey coats disappear!' 'In Meissen, in Bavaria, in the Mark, and in other places, the tyrants have issued an order that all copies of the New Testament are to be delivered up to the magistrates. Here then I declare that these subjects are not to deliver up one leaf, one letter, on pain of forfeiting their salvation; that whoever surrenders them, delivers over Christ into the hands of Herod; for they are acting, like Herod, as murderers of Christ.'

'It is God Himself who has decreed that the princes should act so preposterously, should be puffed up so egregiously. God has given them over to a reprobate mind, and will make an end of them, and also of the ecclesiastical nobles.' 'The secular lords may rule their lands and people in externals; that may be left as it is. They can do no more than oppress and injure, heap tax on tax, exaction on exaction; let loose here a bear and there a wolf, do violence to all law, truth, and fidelity, and so act that robbers and scoundrels grow all too many, and their secular rule becomes as deeply degraded as the rule of the spiritual tyrants. And then God perverts their mind, so that they want to be spiritual sovereigns over souls also, just as those others want to have temporal sovereignty, and thus they gaily burden themselves with foreign sins and the hatred of God and man, till they all make shipwreck with bishops, priests, and monks, one scoundrel with another; and then they lay the blame of it all on the Gospel, and instead of making confession they blaspheme God, and say it is our preaching which has done it all. But it is only the just punishment that their wickedness has deserved.'

'Behold,' he exclaims to his readers, 'there you have the counsel of God concerning the great ones of the earth. But they will not be suffered to believe it, lest such a severe judgment of God should be hindered by their repentance.'

'From the beginning of the world,' he says further on, 'a clever prince has been a very rare bird, and a pious prince a still rarer one. They are generally the biggest fools or the worst scoundrels on earth, so that one must always expect the worst from them, and look for little good, especially in divine matters, which concern the salvation of the soul. For they are God's gaolers and hangmen, and his divine wrath makes use of them to punish the wicked and to preserve external peace. He is a great Lord, is our God; therefore he must have such noble, high-born, and rich hangmen and gaolers. But I would like in all sincerity to advise these blind-eyed people to consider a short sentence which occurs in the hundred and seventh psalm: "God has poured out contempt upon princes." I swear to you by God, if you do not take heed, that this little verse will be fulfilled in you, so that you will be utterly lost, were you, each one of you, as mighty as the Turks, and all your snorting and fuming will not help you. Already it has in great measure come about. For there are very few princes who are not looked upon as fools or rascals. For, indeed, they prove themselves to be such, and the poor man is growing wise, and the plague of the princes is becoming intolerable among the common people, and I fear the princes will not be able to defend themselves, unless they behave themselves in a princely manner, and begin again to rule soberly and with reason. The people will not, they cannot, any longer endure your

tyranny and your presumption. Dear Princes and Lords, be advised, and change your ways. God will not suffer it any longer. The world's no longer what it used to be, when you drove the people before you like the wind.'

Melanchthon contradicted most emphatically the report that Luther was in league with Sickingen; the latter, he said, on the contrary, loaded Luther's cause with infamy, and Luther grieved deeply over Sickingen's insurrection. Luther's pamphlet, however, could not but strengthen the Catholics in their belief that he was allied with the revolutionary knight.

When Duke George of Saxony complained to the Elector Frederic, on March 21, 1523, of this 'scandalously seditious' pamphlet, and urged that Luther should be punished, the Elector answered that 'he had, as was generally known, never taken up this business of Luther's, and he could not concern himself with this pamphlet, that George indeed could not expect this of him.' The Council of Regency also, to which George appealed, answered that it did not know what to advise this time, and cautioned the Duke to abstain from further strife with Luther.

'It was, therefore, no wonder,' wrote Carl von Bodmann, 'that it was supposed in Germany that all manner of abuse of spiritual and secular authorities was allowed, and that the princes had no longer any power to ward off the fall with which they were threatened by the common people.'

The Bavarian chancellor, Leonhard von Eck, in a letter of March 20, 1523, to his sovereign lord, Duke Wilhelm, spoke in warning tones of the manner in which Luther incited the people against the princes

'Doctor Luther,' he said, 'has written a German book and had it printed, to show the sort of way in which vassals should be subject to their rulers, in which book he calls secular princes fools, villains, and heretics, and abuses them to the utmost. He denounces them as tyrants, especially in Meissen, in Bavaria, and in the Mark; and goes so far as to say that they oppress and fleece the people by taxes, duties, &c. Luther is endeavouring to stir up the subjects against their rulers. Therefore, if ever there has been need of princes and their supervision, it is now, and it will never do to laugh at matters and 'sail with half a wind.' 'Will your Princely Highness,' he repeats eight days later, 'think about action, now that every place is in rebellion? A pamphlet has been distributed among the people in which, as I am told, they are exhorted, for many reasons, to throw off the servitude under which they have so long been ground down by the tyranny of kings, princes, and lords. They are told that in so acting they will be doing a good work. All this comes from that wicked man Luther, and from Franz von Sickingen, and if ever there was a powerful *Bundschuh* and insurrection against the princes it is now.'

There was special fear abroad that Sickingen had allied himself to Duke Ulrich of Württemberg, who had been expelled from his country by the Suabian league, and for many years past had made common cause with the people, and was endeavouring with their help to recover his duchy. Ulrich had entrenched himself in his strong fortress of Hohentwiel, in the Hegau, and worked assiduously to gain the good-will of the common people of the Hegau and the Thurgau. Already at the end of the year 1522 they had instituted a banner of

their own, made of white damask, with a nimbus and a *Bundschuh* painted on it, and round it the inscription, 'Whoever will be free let him come up here into this sunshine.' Thus, as it was put to the inhabitants of the Würtemberg Black Forest, by the Austrian Government of Stuttgardt, under whose rule Würtemberg then was, under the 'sweet semblance of liberty' Ulrich tried to tempt back the simple uneducated people to the heavy yoke of the old servitude. Any intelligent person, indeed, could see that the object of Ulrich's partisans was not and could not be to maintain freedom, but to get as much plunder and gain as possible for themselves, and even to take away such freedom as any individuals already possessed, and to reduce the people to greater bondage than before. The poor people, so the Austrian government at Stuttgart reported to the Archduke Ferdinand, were everywhere longing to become free, to pay no more taxes, and to share the property of the wealthy classes; the Archduke was therefore advised to despatch mounted troops to the district, so that they might be beforehand with the populace in case of an insurrection. Against Sickingen also complaints were lodged with the Reichsregiment by the federated Princes of Treves, Hesse, and the Palatinate, to the effect that he was constantly plotting and manœuvring with his adherents to incite the common people to rebellion against all authority and respectability, and to attach them to himself.

By the end of September 1522 these three princes had pledged themselves to unite in forcible measures against Sickingen, in order 'to get rid of this noxious root,' so that peace and concord and security to

trade might be re-established in the Empire. Duke George of Saxony had long insisted that the nests must be destroyed. Even should the whole Empire be engaged for a year, or even for two years, in the siege of one of those houses, it would be better than constant liability to such turbulent commotion; it would also cost less, serve the cause of freedom better, and be quite as meritorious a work as the expulsion of the Turks from Jerusalem. The Margrave Joachim von Brandenburg also demanded that Sickingen's proceedings should be put a stop to. 'This man,' he said, 'was like the Turk in the Empire, falling foul of one prince to-day, of another to-morrow.'

As the three confederate princes could get no help from the powerless Reichsregiment, in spite of the imperial ban hanging over Sickingen, they came to an understanding with the Suabian League, which was to undertake an expedition against the Franconian robber knights. The imperial vicegerent, Archduke Ferdinand, and the Estates, assembled at a Diet at Nuremberg, tried in vain to arrange a compromise. Sickingen would hear of no surrender. To the peace commissioners who were sent to him he declared that he was a chosen instrument of God for the punishment of the clergy; that he was expecting strong military reinforcements from Germany and France, and that he had resolved to carry out the work to which God had called him.

But he greatly over-estimated his capacity of resistance to the princes. Luther had early predicted a disastrous issue to the undertaking.

When the decisive moment arrived Sickingen's

confederates were not to the fore, and his expectation of a simultaneous rising of the nobility in the Palatinate, in Hesse, and in Treves was disappointed. The allied princes conducted their plan with the utmost circumspection, and in April 1523 they marched upon Sickingen's stronghold of Landstuhl to 'snare the bird in its nest,' for there the robber knight was himself entrenched, whilst his son Schweikard was negotiating with Count Eitelfritz of Zollern for the despatch of an army of relief. On April 29 the siege of the citadel began in real earnest. On the third day Sickingen was mortally wounded by a blow from a falling beam, which tore open his whole side, 'leaving his lungs and his liver naked to the sight.' The garrison capitulated on May 6, while Sickingen lay dying in a dark vault in the rock. 'Where now are my friends and brother knights,' he lamented, 'von Arnberg, von Fürstenberg, von Zollern, the men of Switzerland and of Strasburg, and all of the "Brotherhood" who promised me so much and have performed so little? Let none, therefore, put their trust in men or in riches.' Whom he meant by 'all of the Brotherhood' is not known.

On May 7 the princes made their entry into the citadel, and went to see Sickingen in his dungeon. When the Archbishop of Treves said to him: 'Franz, what possessed you thus to invade my territory and injure my poor people?' the dying man answered: 'There's much to be said on that score, and nothing without reason.' When the princes had left him Sickingen made confession to his chaplain, and died while receiving the sacrament. 'After he was dead,' Spalatin relates, 'some peasants and the Landgrave's

servants squeezed his body into an old armour-chest, so that his head and knees were bent together, dragged him down the mountain with a cord, and buried him in a little chapel of Landstuhl.' 'So ended the man,' says Spalatin, 'who but a short time before had been the terror of the whole Roman Empire.' 'If God had not called him away,' says an old Basle chronicle, 'Sickingen would have brought greater disasters on the princes than Ziska once upon a time caused in the kingdom of Bohemia.' 'God is a just Judge, but at the same time an astounding one,' wrote Luther in heaviness of heart, on hearing the news of the knight's death. The Elector Frederic of Saxony said in a letter to Spalatin: 'That Sickingen, to whom may God be gracious, should have paid thus with his life and goods is truly, to human thinking, marvellous to hear.'

After the downfall of Sickingen the Catholics, according to Spalatin's account, exclaimed: 'The would-be Emperor is dead; soon too an end will come to the would-be Pope'—meaning Luther, who was only longing for that time to come. Anyhow the adherents of the new religious opinions were most profoundly distressed and alarmed by the loss of one of their first and mightiest protectors. 'I cannot tell you,' wrote Martin Butzer to Zwingli on June 9, 1523, 'how greatly the fall of this one man has caused the popish monsters to lift up their horns. For right well did Antichrist know that he must fall to the ground if by the exertions of Sickingen the Gospel should once again be preached in its freedom and purity; and therefore he left no stone unturned to ruin this man.' 'We had set great hopes on Sickingen, but now his

whole work is tottering and crumbling to pieces,' Otto Brunfels laments in a letter to Zwingli, 'and not only his work but that of all the supporters of the Gospel. Our Hutten is in evil plight, and all the rest of us everywhere humbled to the dust. We are derided in all lands, and I know not what misfortunes are in store for us.' 'Not one of the princes or the Pharisees,' he says elsewhere, 'believes in the Gospel.' Hutten scented a regular conspiracy of the princes against the new teaching: everywhere, he believed, the party hostile to the Gospel was conquering and prevailing.

Hutten, fearing well-merited punishment from the princes for his revolutionary proceedings, had speedily left Landstuhl, and towards the end of 1522 he came destitute and racked with physical pains as a fugitive, to Basle, where he had friends, and where he counted especially on the assistance of Erasmus, his former teacher and leader, who was then making a stay at Basle. Friendship with the sons of misfortune, however, did not enter into Erasmus's scheme of life, and friendship with Hutten would, moreover, have brought him into discredit with his highest patrons, and would have caused, he feared, too great a strain on his purse. It was the delight of Erasmus to play in his writings the part of a Christian monitor. Not to the monks only, but to all who bore the name of Christians, he preached that exclusive possessions were forbidden; that among Christians love made all things common property, and that whosoever did not support a needy brother according to his power, must be looked upon as if he was retaining stolen goods in his possession. But Hutten in his adversity did not find that Erasmus

carried his preaching into practice: the pretended Christian socialist repulsed the sick and downfallen knight coldly and unsympathisingly, and sent him word that he did not wish to be embarrassed and compromised by visits from him. To a friend Erasmus wrote that he meant well by him in so far as Hutten meant well by himself, but that he had other business to attend to.

Deeply hurt by this treatment, Hutten branded Erasmus as an apostate from the Gospel, and vented all his wrath and indignation against him in a calumnious pamphlet. 'What can be the cause of such backsliding?' he asks. 'Jealousy of Luther's fame? Abject fear of the opposite party? Bribery? Or could it be that Erasmus had changed his views?' 'The banding together of so many princes against the Gospel left him doubtful of the result, and so he found it politic to break away from the cause and to make sure at any rate of the favour of the princes.' 'Erasmus intended to bind the princes to himself by some service, and was therefore going to write against the Lutherans. 'O unworthy spectacle!' exclaims Hutten in his pamphlet. 'Erasmus has given himself up to the Pope. He has received from him a commission to see that no injury is done to the prestige of the Apostolic Chair. And he has already commenced hostilities, has already inflicted a wound. Oh, what tergiversation!' 'Formerly,' Hutten goes on, 'Erasmus had worked towards the same end as himself and Luther, and if the greater part of his writings was not destroyed, all readers who looked at the substance and not merely at the words would see that he be-

longed then, to the very party which he was now striving to demolish.'

Erasmus wrote a reply to which he gave the title of 'A Sponge to wipe off Hutten's Aspersions.' He attacked Hutten's character and conduct mercilessly, and did not even refrain from railing at his misfortunes. With perfect justice he represented Hutten as a standing warning to the young; but it was a revelation of Erasmus's own character that he should have been capable of writing as he did, after the man's death, of one with whom for long years he had stood on the most friendly relations, whom he had praised and encouraged. 'Many men,' he said, 'start with looking complacently on their own vices, think carousing and fornication becoming to their youth, hold it a grand and spirited thing to gamble and squander their money. Meanwhile their fortunes diminish, their debts increase, their reputation suffers, the favour of the princes, on whose good graces they lived, forsakes them. Necessity then soon leads to robbery, which at first is practised under the name of war; but when this pretext is worn out, like the leaking sieve of the Danaids, recourse is had to mean stratagems, and wherever there is a chance of snapping up booty no distinction is made betwixt friends and foes, till at last passion, like a horse that has thrown its rider, rushes suddenly to ruin.' In his 'Sponge' he classed Hutten among the men who, under the cloak of the Gospel, think themselves justified in living entirely on plunder and rapine, who have no scruples about robbing travellers on the public highways, and who, when they have squandered their money in wine, rioting, and gambling, think it an honourable proceed-

ing to declare a feud against anybody from whom anything is to be gained.

In this pamphlet against Hutten, Erasmus, as usual, gave equivocating explanations of his own attitude towards the Church and towards the Lutheran party, and he made at the same time some remarkable suggestions as to how the cause of the Gospel might be furthered without tumult. He himself, he said, belonged to no party; he valued his independence too greatly. The Lutheran proceedings had been started without his advice, and Luther's obstinate spirit had displeased him from the first. Hutten, however, had no warrant for accusing him of having declared himself devoted to the Pontificate. At the same time he should never break with the Roman See unless Rome should break with Christ. The Church in its fight against the new teaching appeared to this 'oracle of learning' only as one party against another; both parties must learn to come to a mutual understanding, and this ought to be all the easier as they were at one as regards all the chief articles of Christian faith and conduct, and the quarrel was to a great extent concerned merely with paradoxes that were either incomprehensible or unimportant. Dropping their private animosities and prejudices, the spiritual and secular potentates should be willing to receive instruction from the mouths of the poor and simple; the men of learning, abandoning strife and slandering, should confer together concerning the healing of the soul and the welfare of Christianity, and the results of such conferences should be communicated to the Pope and the Emperor privately. With unobtrusive measures of this

sort Erasmus contemplated healing the sickness of the times.

Melanchthon apprehended evil consequences from Hutten's attack on Erasmus. 'Hutten,' he writes, 'endangers us with his raging. He brings down on us the hatred of all well-disposed persons! It appears that Erasmus is more incensed with us even than with Hutten.' And again: 'We are complete strangers to the intentions of Hutten.'

'Erasmus has shamefully deserted the cause of the Gospel,' said Hutten in a letter to Eobanus Hessus on July 21, 1523, 'but he repents him of the bad exchange he has made. Flight has led me among the Swiss, and I anticipate a still more distant banishment; for Germany in its present condition will not tolerate me; but I hope shortly to see this state of things happily changed by the expulsion of the tyrants.' He sent Eobanus a pamphlet 'Against the Tyrants'—*i.e.* the princes whom Sickingen had plundered of their possessions—and begged him earnestly to get it printed in Erfurt. 'The job,' he says, 'can be managed quietly and secretly, and nowhere better than in a town where no one suspects anything of the kind, especially now that I am so far away. Again I entreat you, waste no time in this matter, which is most important for us.'

But Hutten had miscalculated. His former confederate Eobanus was no longer willing to forward the printing of a pamphlet of that sort. Now, as before, indeed, he inveighed against the Pope as a wolf wearing the mask of innocence, and against his subordinates as the authors of all that was execrable, but he was no longer an apostle of deliverance from the princes. In

consequence of the disrepute into which university studies had fallen at Erfurt, through the haranguing of the preachers and their followers, Eobanus had been nearly reduced to starvation, and he was now courting the favour of the Landgrave Philip of Hesse, in order to obtain a post in Marburg. He stigmatised Sickingen and his associates as robbers, and expressed his delight at their punishment to the Landgrave's chancellor. Thus Hutten could not expect help from Eobanus in the circulation of his pamphlet 'Against the Tyrants,' and eventually the manuscript was lost.

Hutten had been compelled to leave Basle, because he had plotted to bring about the downfall of the Church system there. For a similar reason he had to fly from Mülhausen. At last he found shelter at Zürich with Ulrich Zwingli. At the end of August 1523, he died on the island of Ufnau, on the Lake of Zürich, in the thirty-sixth year of his age. Zwingli tells us that he left nothing of any value behind him. He had no books, and nothing in the way of household furniture but a pen.

With Sickingen and Hutten the revolutionary knights lost their heads and leaders; and in a short time nothing more was heard of their plans for upsetting the constitution of the Empire.

Sickingen's castles were all seized by the allied princes, and many of them burnt down; the princes joined together in a fresh offensive alliance, by which they pledged themselves to fight together with life and goods for the maintenance of their conquests.

The Franconian knighthood was humbled by the Suabian League; more than twenty robber castles were destroyed in June and July 1523, but it was a matter

of general lament that the limb-hacker, Hans Thomas von Absberg, could not be caught and punished as he deserved.

The political independence of the lesser nobility was crushed, but the revolutionary ideas which had gained ground amongst them were by no means extinguished.

The politico-religious revolution spread more and more widely among the people, and, side by side with the multitude of seditious evangelical preachers, the expelled knights plotted secretly to incite the vassals of the princes, and the peasants especially, to open revolt.

Not, however, until the ruling power of the Empire had been annihilated, the central authority reduced to impotence, and religion given over to utter lawlessness, did the revolution come to a head.

CHAPTER V

THE REICHSREGIMENT AND THE DIETS OF 1522-1523

THE Reichsregiment,[1] which held its first sitting at Nuremberg in the autumn of 1521, commenced operations by issuing a decree providing for the establishment and perpetuation of the *Landsfriede*. By one of the clauses of this decree a change was made against which Maximilian I., in his efforts for imperial supremacy, had constantly struggled—namely, the election of the heads of the provinces and their councillors was transferred to the electors of the provinces. The next step was to summon a Diet at Nuremberg, chiefly for the purpose of arranging a campaign against the Turks, who had made themselves masters of Belgrade, had seized and devastated the greater part of Hungary, and were on the point of invading Lower Austria, Bavaria, and other German provinces. 'The need was great,' so ran the writ, 'and an invasion of the infidels might be expected any month, but help was slow in coming, and each one thought only of himself, and many even grudged the expense of attending the Diet.' Only a few of the notables were present in Nuremberg at the appointed hour. Mahomet Bey had just occupied Wallachia; in

[1] Or Council of Regency, appointed to govern in the Emperor's absence from Germany. See Dyer's *Modern Europe*, i. 330.—TRANSLATOR.

Hungary there was daily fear of a fierce attack by Sultan Solyman through Siebenbürgen, of the blockade of the Moldau, and of an invasion of Slavonia. In April 1522 the Turks ravaged the whole of the Karst towards Friaul.

'In one day,' writes Georg Kirchmair in his memoirs, 'they carried off more than six thousand people. Little children were torn from one another; women were shamefully, inhumanly treated; priests were murdered, and everything burnt. And on May 15, 1522, they were still encamped before Laybach, twenty-four thousand in number. But there is no one who has compassion on them. Nowhere is there any helper or deliverer; there is no prince or leader. Each one is waiting till his own walls are in flames. Oh, how miserably are our Christian brothers forsaken!' 'Nobody is concerned for the honour and protection of the Christian religion, but none forgets to look after his own interest.'[1] As a protection against danger from the Turks the Council of Regency issued an edict on March 25, for the institution of public processions and prayers, and ordered that at midday in all the towns, boroughs, and villages a special bell should be rung, at the sound of which all the people should offer up prayers to God 'that He might withhold the thunderbolts of His wrath and grant the Christian people victory over the Turks.'

On April 7, the Count Palatine Frederic announced to the members of the Diet, in his capacity of Imperial Vicegerent, that the Emperor would give up the contingent of 20,000 infantry and 4,000 cavalry, which had been granted him for the march to Rome, in order that these forces might assist in the urgently

[1] In *Fontes Rer. Austr.* i. 458.

needed Turkish campaign. But not one of the notables took any early action. 'As usual,' as the Frankfort delegate, Philip Fürstenberg, wrote home, 'official quarrels broke out, and so the business was not settled.' The Council stated in their report that, considering the greatness and imminence of the danger from the Turks, they had expected that all the Electors and the other members would have come without fail to the Diet, but that only a minority of them had been present, and they had therefore postponed this business to another Diet on September 1. Meanwhile a Turkish tax was imposed on all the Estates and subjects of the Empire, and on May 8, at the last sitting of the Council, it was resolved that three-eighths of the forces offered at the Worms Diet should be utilised against the Turks. Each Estate was to send in its money contribution without delay or evasion. But the payments came in very slowly. By the end of July, for instance, Worms and Spires had paid nothing at all, and the Reichsregiment prepared to proceed against these towns and win contumacious subjects. The city of Frankfort, which, in view of the urgent need, had been pressed by the Council for a loan of 4,000 gulden, excused itself on account of its many feuds and necessary expenses for town buildings.

The second Diet summoned at Nuremberg to consider the Turkish question also failed to meet on the date fixed, because in the meanwhile Franz von Sickingen had appeared 'as a Turk in the Empire,' and because tumult and insurrection were apprehended throughout the country. 'The notables behaved very ill with regard to the Diet,' wrote the Frankfort delegate,

Hamann von Holzhausen, in October 1522; 'not a single prince attended it. I wish I were back at home.' 'Archduke Ferdinand,' who had succeeded to the office of Imperial Vicegerent in place of the Palatine Frederic, 'is working most energetically to get the Diet together, but it is still doubtful whether the meeting will take place.'

It was not till November 17 that the Diet assembled, and the members present were then informed that the chief business to be discussed was as follows: how permanent peace was to be established; how resistance was to be opposed to the Turks; and how the *Reichsregiment* and the *Kammergericht* were to be permanently maintained and guaranteed fixed revenue. It had now come to this, that twenty-six free cities, thirty-eight prelates, twenty-nine counts and barons, seven German and eleven Italian princes had ceased to pay taxes for the support of these two administrative bodies. If supplies were not forthcoming, it was to be feared that the paralysis and dissolution of these imperial institutions must ensue, with the unavoidable result of 'insurrection, disaffection, and disturbance of peace and order.'

But the debates about taxation had scarcely begun when 'all the members, who, seeing the urgency of the need, ought to have been unanimous, became divided one against the other.' It was 'piteous to behold, and a matter almost for despair.' 'Each Estate thought itself the most heavily burdened, and each threw the blame of the necessity and misfortune on the other.' 'All the wounds of the Empire began suddenly to bleed.'

The town delegates complained, and indeed with justice, that they were not admitted to the delibera-

tions of the Diet, but only expected to agree to what the electors, princes, and other notables had settled. 'The electors and princes have been pleased to decide,' wrote the Frankfort delegate, 'that henceforth they will not grant the towns any voice or weight in their councils and business, but will exclude them altogether.' Such treatment seemed intolerable to the town representatives, and they profited by the opportunity 'to speak openly once for all and pour out their complaints.' They handed in accordingly a petition of grievances.

Hitherto, they said in their petition, the towns had always been regarded as forming one of the Estates of the Empire; they had been represented at the general Diets, and in imperial taxation they had been rated more highly than the other Estates; at the sittings of the Imperial Assembly they had, not long ago, had a voice as well as the princes and the other notables, and they had assisted in the settlement of any business that was transacted. Now, on the contrary, the town delegates were no longer admitted to the debates of the Empire, and all affairs that the Empire had to regulate and administer were discussed and settled without them. But it was above all essential in the present troubled times that there should be union and co-operation of all the Estates; therefore they prayed that these things should be 'put back into the old order.'

The remaining complaints of the town representatives referred to the tardiness of the execution of justice and to the system of feuds. 'The latter had gained ground in such a manner that no life or property was any longer safe, and no trade or business could be carried on. In spite of all regulations for public peace

and order, property was continually being stolen from citizens in the streets, and carried off, or burnt in the open fields; wayfarers were attacked and wounded, had their limbs chopped off, or were cruelly murdered, or incarcerated. Such gruesome and wicked deeds were perpetrated 'as were terrible to think of even among infidels.' Moreover 'the doers and perpetrators of these crimes, however dishonourable, gross, and excessive they might be, were not only seldom punished, but even winked at and tolerated. If this iniquitous state of things was not ended, the whole German nation would be confronted with ruin.' Furthermore the multitude of new taxes imposed by the princes and the magistrates was quite unendurable. The German nation was already more highly burdened than any other with all sorts of heavy taxes, dues, fines, tolls, rents, and other liabilities; it was contrary to all laws, human and divine, that an individual, a ruler, or a class should grow rich at the sacrifice of so many fellow-creatures, or should fatten on the sweat and labour of the common people. It was well known how troubled affairs were becoming everywhere throughout the Empire, and it was, therefore, advisable not to oppress the common people with any more insupportable burdens.' Complaints of an equally serious nature were made about the spiritual tribunals, the Court of Rome, and the coinage of the realm: false and base coins were circulated in quantities in German provinces; the good ones were smuggled into Italy by the Jews and Christians; all the money of the country was being rapidly lost.

To this petition of grievances the electors, the princes, and the other notables gave the following

answer on January 23, 1523: With regard to imperial representation no right had been taken away from the towns, for they had never had a voice in the Council of the Empire; it was true that occasionally at the Diets town delegates had been chosen as members of committees, but this had never been a right but a favour shown to them. As to the slow execution of law, the towns themselves were to blame; the feuds did not injure the free cities only but all the Estates, and measures were already being taken to ensure a satisfactory maintenance of the *Landfriede*; the taxes were certainly oppressive, but these had been levied by the Emperor, and it would not become the Estates of the Empire to curtail the power of the Imperial Majesty. The towns ought to have brought their complaints on this score before the Emperor personally at Worms. Concerning the ecclesiastical jurisdiction, negotiations with the Pope were even now being instituted; the ordinaries themselves were quite disposed to reorganise their tribunals in a judicial manner. As for the currency, it was the towns that were specially guilty in the matter of clipping coins and otherwise tampering with them.

'The town delegates are fairly disgusted with this abominable, mocking, contemptuous answer,' wrote Hamann von Holtzhausen on January 25, 1523, to the Council of Frankfort, 'and they have agreed together to give no opinion on the resolutions of the electors, princes, and other notables, to contribute no money and to take no part in signing the minutes.' 'I have no further news to write,' he says on the same day in a letter to the burgomaster of Frankfort, Johann von Glauburg, 'except that matters generally, and the

proceedings at the Diet to-day, seem tending to great acrimony, dissatisfaction, and sedition. God in His mercy and grace preserve us from this last danger. This Diet was convoked for the purpose of establishing peace, and so we do nothing here but foment discontent and strife.'

These contentions among the members had an important and decisive bearing on the question of supplies for the Turkish expedition.

The town delegates absolutely refused their consent to the Turkish tax proposed at the previous Diet of Nuremberg, because the towns were proportionately more highly rated than the higher Estates. They also refused contributions of any description, whether of money or of men, to an army of 4,000 men, which the other Estates had guaranteed to the Hungarian ambassador on December 19, 1522. The ambassadors from Hungary and Croatia had begged for help, for both provinces were in the greatest danger of being conquered by the Turks, and in case they (the ambassadors) returned without a reassuring answer the inhabitants would go over to the Turks. 'Unmoved,' the town delegates persisted in their refusal, even when the Knights of St. John, after a long and heroic fight against the superior force of the Osmans, had been obliged to leave their island of Rhodes, which was one of the most important bulwarks of Christianity. It was quite impossible, as the delegates had already declared at a previous meeting of the Diet, for the German nation to conquer the Turks alone, and unless the Pope and all the Christian kings and Powers combined together to demolish them, Germany would get nothing from the war but shame, defeat, and loss. In

the event of the Turks themselves attacking and overrunning Germany every Estate and every community, spiritual and secular, should then be required to contribute a moderate and suitable number of men, and each community should be left to tax its own population itself, and to pay the troops that it supplied from the proceeds of the taxes.

'There is no longer any question of unity among the Germans,' wrote the papal nuncio Francesco Chieregati to Rome; 'we may be thankful that there is even a prospect of only a very small contribution of forces against the infidels; but whether even those will really be contributed time alone will show.' On the nuncio's petitioning that the whole of the forces promised to the Emperor for his march to Rome at the Diet of Worms should be utilised against the Turks, the Estates had answered that the internal condition of Germany had become so infinitely worse since the meeting of that Diet that so strong an armament could not be sent out of the country.

The conflict between the towns and the other Estates of the Empire at the Diet of Nuremberg was intensified by the proposal, emanating from the latter, to levy an imperial duty, which the towns pronounced to be 'utterly monstrous and calculated to ruin them.'

In order to provide for the maintenance of the *Kammergericht* and the *Reichsregiment*, and also to defray the expenses of administration, a general customs duty, both on exports and on imports, was to be levied on all goods not included in the absolute necessaries of life, and this duty was to be at the rate of four per cent. on the market purchasing price of the commodities.

In a fresh petition of grievances of February 2,

1523, the town delegates complained that a tax of this sort would be the ruin of all trade and would provoke the people to fatal sedition; all artisans and good workmen would be driven by it into other countries, and Germany would be utterly beggared. If the princes persisted in this scheme they could not, they declared, concur in the Diet's proceedings, resolutions, or dissolution.

The other Estates answered that this new tax would not fall heavily on the common people, for the goods necessary for general use, wine and beer, oxen, sheep, pigs, and all other animals, besides cheese, salt, and lard, fresh and salted fish, leather, and copper, were all untaxable; only such goods were taxable as came under the head of luxuries and non-essentials, and it would thus be in the power of each individual to avoid being injured by the tax. Moreover, as this duty was intended solely for the maintenance of the *Reichsregiment* and the *Kammergericht*, and for carrying out the regulations of the *Landfriede* and ensuring security in the public streets, and would accordingly promote peace and order in the realm, it would be as beneficial to the tradespeople as to the working classes. Other nations, as was well known, for the sake of the common good, had levied a similar, or even a higher tax on all articles of commerce, and trade and business had by no means diminished in consequence; on the contrary they had increased, because the money had been spent in securing the safety of the streets; besides which this customs duty only affected foreign countries, such as Bohemia, Hungary, Poland, England, whence the taxable goods were imported. Moreover this tax, as the customs regulations set forth, was not to last longer than five years without

a further decree of the Emperor and the Estates. For all these reasons it seemed strange that the town delegates should view this tax in the light of a grievance, and should rate the profit of a few tradespeople more highly than the common good of some 100,000 human beings. With regard to the reiterated complaints of the towns concerning prestige and votes, these should be brought before the Emperor and the absent notables, and a further answer be given at the next Diet. But even if the towns had, which they denied, a right to a voice in the deliberations of the Council, they could not thereby obstruct the decisions of the majority of the Estates. For it would be an unheard-of, extraordinary, and most unjust innovation if the decisions of all or most of the members went for nothing in case the town delegates did not approve of them; the whole government of the Empire would then be entirely in the hands of the towns.

'It's my belief,' wrote the Bavarian chancellor, Leonhard von Eck, to Duke William, 'that the towns will not in any way consent to this tax, and that they will communicate on the subject with His Imperial Majesty in Spain, and with Ferdinand; and it is the opinion of some that if they are coerced by the *Reichsregiment* or the *Kammergericht* they will go over to the Swiss or the French.'

The most important transactions of the Nuremberg Diet related to the ecclesiastical complications.

The *Reichsregiment* had never since its opening acted firmly with regard to the Church movement, but had let things take their chance, now for, now against Luther. So little indeed had it done towards

the execution of the Edict of Worms, the carrying out of which the Emperor had imperatively commanded, that in Nuremberg itself Lutheran books were printed and offered publicly for sale, and from some of the pulpits even Lutheran doctrines were preached, and Pope and bishops, Church precepts, and old usages and ordinances virulently abused. The legal assessors of the Council were many of them apostates from the ancient Church system, but lovers of Church property and treasures; they had dreams of a golden time when the possessions of the Church should be partitioned, ecclesiastical arrogance humbled in the dust, the episcopate abolished, and the Pope and cardinals deprived of all authority. When these things came to pass, they said to themselves, there would grow up a secular *régime*, in which they, the learned ones of the law, would bear rule instead of princes. It was in vain that Duke George of Saxony complained repeatedly to the Council of Luther's insolent invectives against the Pope and the Emperor, against the princes of the Empire, and against the *Reichsregiment* itself. On his sending them the pamphlets which were full of this abuse he only received the answer: 'We learn that Your Highness is displeased with the abuse hurled at the Papal Holiness and the Imperial Majesty, and we assure Your Highness that we ourselves should not willingly tolerate insult and injury to the Imperial Majesty wherever we should observe or experience it.' They would not see or believe anything, nor proceed actively in any way against Luther's actions. 'Against a matter of this sort,' the Imperial Vicegerent, Count Palatine Frederic, explained later on to the Duke, 'it had not been possible to take any action.' While

Sickingen was plotting the overthrow of the imperial constitution for the benefit of the new gospel he was assured by Johann von Fuchstein, chancellor to the Vicegerent and assessor of the *Reichsregiment*, that the entire Council was favourably disposed towards him. The Elector Frederic of Saxony, who, according to rule, was obliged to attend the Council in the summer of 1522, scarcely even arrived at having any definite policy, still less at proceeding to action, and by his inaction gave the reins to disaffection towards the Emperor and the Empire and the encouragement of all manner of disturbances both in ecclesiastical and secular departments. Under Frederic's protection Luther was left free to hurl, with impunity, his insults and anathemas against the King of England, the Emperor's ally, and against the German princes, the Dukes of Bavaria, the Elector of Brandenburg, and Duke George of Saxony, and to denounce them as murderers of Christ, and tyrants and executioners of the people. The Elector caused Luther to be informed that 'he had always declared to his Papal Holiness, his Imperial Majesty, and the other Estates that he had had nothing to do with Luther and his proceedings.' To the Emperor, Frederic wrote 'he begged, as he had so often done before, that they would not consult with him on this matter; he was feeble with age and sickness, and did not understand the business; he could give little or no advice as to what was to be done.' Frederic's minister, Hans von Planitz, informed the Council that the Elector thought it advisable, in spite of the imperial ban, to countenance Luther's continued residence in Wittenberg, for he did not teach any heresy, and if he were removed imitators would spring

up who would not only preach against the Church but against God and Christendom, and utter unbelief would be propagated.

Utter unbelief did indeed show itself in all quarters as the fruit of the rebellion against Church authority; with the breakdown of spiritual restraints all secular ones gave way also, and the door was thrown open to every description of lawlessness.

'Will those who despise the precepts of the Church and the holy Councils, and do not scruple to tear up and burn the decrees of the Fathers,' asked Pope Adrian VI. of the Estates assembled at the Nuremberg Diet, 'will such as these obey the laws of the Empire? Do you imagine that men who are not afraid to carry off before your eyes the things that are consecrated to God, will refrain from stretching out their hands to seize the goods of the laity? Will they spare your heads if they despise the anointed of the Lord?'

Pope Adrian VI. was most anxious to treat with the members of the Nuremberg Diet, in a spirit of peace and conciliation, concerning the ecclesiastical affairs of the Empire. 'No man could be more upright and well-intentioned than Adrian,' says a contemporary chronicle. Born at Utrecht of German burgher parents, and educated at Zwolle by the Brethren of the Common Life, he had early won himself great esteem by his piety, his learning, and the strictness of his morals; he obtained a professorship of theology at Löwen, became tutor to Charles V., and for some time administered the affairs of the government in Spain, as Charles's vicegerent. After the death of Leo X., on December 1, 1521, he was 'quite unexpectedly and to the joy of all good people' elected Pope by the College

of Cardinals, and all his thoughts and energies 'were thenceforth devoted to the reformation of clerical life, the liberation of Christendom from the Turkish yoke, and the suppression of the religious contentions in his German Fatherland.'

'With unparalleled candour' this Pope spoke out concerning the necessity of reform both in the head and the members, and above all concerning the grievous abuses of the Roman Court. 'We are well aware,' he informed the Diet through his nuncio Francesco Chieregati, 'that even in this Holy See, for many years past, much that is abominable has been going on—abuses in things spiritual, transgressions of commands; yea, that all things have been perverted to evil. It is therefore indeed not to be wondered at if the sickness has spread from the head to the limbs, from the popes to the lesser prelates. We have all of us wandered from the right way, and we must therefore humble ourselves before God. As far as it lies with us to do anything in this matter we will use all diligence that first of all the Court of Rome, from which, perhaps, all this iniquity has gone forth, may be improved; and then, as the sickness proceeded from Rome, so too the restoration to health will begin there. We consider ourselves all the more in duty bound to take steps in earnest, since the whole world is crying out for a reform of this our Roman Curia. We have never been ambitious of the papal dignity, and we only undertake the office of supreme Pastor in order to have the power to restore the Holy Church, the Bride of Christ, to her pristine beauty; to give succour to the oppressed, to encourage and support the learned and the virtuous, and, in short, to do all

that is incumbent on a good overseer of the Church, and a true successor of St. Peter.' Adrian VI. promised the Estates of the Empire, in all sincerity and honesty, that in future there could be no more disregard of Concordats by the Papal See, and that he would take care to appoint learned and pious Germans to the high offices of the Church; finally he asked advice from the Estates of the realm as to the best way of checking the progress of the 'new gospel' party.

It was a critical moment for the German nation.

The Pope spoke with complete unreserve to the spiritual and secular representatives of the nation from which he had himself sprung and which he loved devotedly; he made them sharers of his anxiety and solicitude for the welfare of Christianity, called upon them for counsel and help, and warned them against the disturbance of ecclesiastical peace and order, which would of necessity be followed by the uprooting of all civil order. He pointed out that, if they provoked and countenanced religious discord and insurrection in the realm, it would never be possible to resist effectually the fury of the Turks, and that civil wars would be almost certain to break out among the Germans. He demanded the execution of the Edict of Worms. All the opinions in which Luther disagreed with the Church had already been repudiated by the Church through the decisions of various Councils. Whatever had been approved and established as dogmas of the faith by the general Councils and the whole Church must never again be treated as doubtful. Otherwise what security could there be for anything on earth? Or when would there be an end of contention and disputation if every perverse and deluded upstart were free

to reject what had been affirmed and consecrated, not by the voice of a few individuals, but by the unanimous judgment of so many centuries, of so many of the wisest of men, and by the decision of the Church itself? Since it is now seen that Luther and his followers condemn the holy Fathers, and set at nought all holy laws and ordinances, that they are turning everything topsy-turvy according to their own arbitrary will and pleasure, and throwing the whole world into confusion, it is evident that if they persist in this behaviour they must be forcibly suppressed as enemies and destroyers of the public peace, and all friends of peace should co-operate to this end.' The nuncio further informed the members of the Diet that it was intended to hold an œcumenical Council in some one of the German towns, for the purpose of considering the questions of the removal of clerical abuses, the restoration of Church discipline, and the quieting of the tumults that had broken out.

A committee of members of the Council and of the several Estates was appointed to draw up an answer to the papal charges, in which Luther's adherents were distinctly predominant. The document drawn up by this committee ran as follows: 'They could not proceed seriously against Luther, because it would be tantamount to a declaration that they wanted to suppress evangelical truth by tyranny, and to countenance unchristian abuses; and the only result would be to provoke resistance to authority, and insurrection, and rebellion. Let the Pope respect the Concordats, redress the grievances of the German nation, and above all exact no more annates, but surrender these for the future to the Imperial Vicegerent and the

Reichsregiment for the time being; or otherwise it was not to be expected that peace, justice, and order could be maintained in Germany. The Pope must, with the consent of the Imperial Majesty, summon an œcumenical Council in some German town within the space of twelve months, and the laity also must have seats and votes in the assembly, before which must be brought all urgent questions relating to divine and evangelical matters concerning the common good. If the Pope would accede to these suggestions they would undertake to arrange with the Elector and with Luther that nothing further should be written or taught, either by Luther or his followers, which would be likely to provoke the people to riot and insurrection. Only the Gospel and the canonical Scriptures should be taught, and that according to their true Christian meaning; the archbishops and bishops should see to this with the assistance of men expert in the interpretations of the Scriptures. Further, a careful supervision should be exercised over all printers and booksellers, to ensure that nothing more was printed or put up for sale which could lead to disturbance and sedition.

Prominent among the members of the committee which drew up this document was the Roman jurist Johann von Schwarzenberg, an active propagator of Luther's gospel, who a short while before had been one of those present at the *Rittertag* (meeting of knights) convened by Sickingen at Landau. It was he who had suggested that most radical innovation on all ancient Church organisation, viz. that laymen also should sit and vote at the œcumenical Councils. In an astrological 'Handbook' composed in allusion to this proposal, and printed at Nuremberg and dedicated to the

Reichsregiment, it was announced that 'a conjunction in the House of Jupiter' pointed to the necessity of convening a council at which, not the Pope, but the Emperor, should undertake to reform, correct, and bring to obedience the Christian Church and all other Estates of the realm. If, as might be expected, he did not meet with obedience, there would be a great war, followed by a violent disturbance of all spiritual and secular principalities. The peasants and common people of many districts would form leagues and would unite together and rise up against, and even above, their kings, princes, and lords; they would everywhere plunder their property, and take whatever they pleased, attack the spiritual and secular Estates; they would spare no one, so that little difference would be seen between the rich and the poor. Everything would be altered, perverted, and revolutionised, and persecution and degradation of the Churches were in prospect.

The opinions of the committee were submitted to the Diet for consideration, and the town delegates expressed themselves highly delighted at them. It was manifest, they said, to all the Estates of the Empire to what lengths the Lutheran transactions had extended and what amount of annoyance and disturbance had been caused by them, and also that all sorts of distressing animosity had thereby been fomented between clergy and laity and between rulers and subjects. But the severe mandates, edicts, and interdictions that had been issued had only aggravated matters and increased the acrimony and hatred between the laity and the clergy. If the Pope and the Emperor would agree to act in conformity with the

proposals of the committee, they were quite sure that not only would the errors now prevalent in the Christian Church be in great measure silenced, but many abuses would also die out of themselves, much of the irritation and animosity between the different classes would cease, and the spiritual and secular States would be re-established side by side in peace and unity.

Amongst the princes present at the Diet few were partisans of Luther. 'Nearly all the princes who are here are opposed to Luther,' wrote Hans von Planitz, the Saxon reporter of the *Reichsregiment*, to the Elector Frederic, 'but their councillors—for the most part Roman jurists—are nearly all good Lutherans.' The Margrave Joachim von Brandenburg especially 'as a Christian Elector would not tolerate any innovations.' He spoke once of Luther to Planitz as follows: 'I wonder what your sovereign lord is thinking of, that he allows and winks at so much in this monk. I will do whatever pleases his Highness, but I will not suffer myself to be scolded by this monk; that is certain.'

In their answer to the Pope's representations the Archduke Ferdinand, as imperial viceroy, and the Electors and princes, said that they had received his communication with reverence and gratitude, and that from what he had said they saw clearly that his Papal Holiness would leave nothing undone that was incumbent on a faithful father and true overseer of the Christian flock; and therefore each one ought to be the more moved to acknowledge his own sins and offences, and to strive after Christian amendment. As Christian members of the Empire they were deeply grieved at all the scandal, schism, and offence that

these religious innovations had caused in the Christian Church, and they were heartily willing to do whatever they could, by punishment or by other means, to improve the state of things. They acknowledged themselves bound to render obedience to his Papal Holiness and his Imperial Majesty, as to their superior heads, and they were no less willing to do this in a Christian manner than were their forefathers. As to the execution of the Edict of Worms, however, they had left that alone for the weightiest and most urgent reasons, in order to avert worse evil. The greater part of the German nation had been convinced long before Luther's time, and had only been strengthened in this conviction by Luther's writings, that Germany suffered much and great injustice from the Roman Curia. If then the Council had rigorously carried out the Edict, universal indignation would have been aroused, just as if they had attempted to suppress evangelical truth and to maintain and defend odious unchristian abuses; and much sedition and tumult would have ensued.

On this point the opinion of the Estates coincided with that of the committee. They also begged and entreated that with a view to the restoration of peace and concord, the Pope would redress those national grievances which they had pointed out in their report.

All these grievances related to real or pretended abuses in the exercise of spiritual authority, to the promulgation of bans, to the immunity of ecclesiastical personages, to encroachments of the clergy on the secular domain, to dispensations, indulgences, reservations, and other clerical ordinances, and did not in any

way touch or impugn the divine basis and character of the Church.[1]

With regard to the forthcoming Council, the notables dropped the most important clause of the report—namely, the claim of the laity to seats and votes. Meanwhile pending the meeting of the Council (the locality of which in Germany the Pope and the Emperor were to determine), the members of the Diet undertook to use all diligence, and especially to negotiate with the Elector Frederic, with a view to preventing Luther and his followers from writing and printing anything fresh. Further, each elector and prince, and each of the notables of the realm, within his own domain was to see that from that time up to the date of the Council nothing should be preached 'but the Holy Gospel, according to the interpretation of Scripture, approved and accepted by the Christian Church,' and that everything should be avoided in sermons which might tend either to incite the common people to rebel against the authorities, or to lead Christians into error. Any preachers who would not submit to these restrictions were to be suitably punished by the ordinaries. Also nothing new was to be printed, or offered for sale, unless it had first been examined and approved by learned persons especially appointed to the task; in especial it was to be forbidden under penalty of severe punishment to print or sell calumnious writings. Clergymen who took to themselves wives, and monks or nuns who forsook the cloisters, were to forfeit their liberties, privileges, benefices, and so forth. Public mandates and edicts would be issued admonishing magistrates not to hinder the ordinaries from inflicting such

punishments, but rather to give them help and support for the maintenance and protection of ecclesiastical authority, in order that such renegade priests might be punished according to the established course of law.

This answer, which was communicated to the nuncio on February 8, 1523, was published to the Empire on March 6 as a resolution issued in the name of the Emperor. It was expressly laid down in it that nothing was to be preached but the Holy Gospel according to the Scriptural interpretation, approved and accepted by the Christian Church, and that nothing fresh was to be printed or sold, unless it had first been examined and sanctioned by learned men specially appointed to the task.

At the same time the notables drew up a form of exhortation to be read out to the Christian people every Sunday from all pulpits, enjoining them 'to call humbly on God and pray to Him to remove the errors which were now everywhere springing up and spreading, through the fault of Christian rulers, spiritual and secular, and also of other men, and to vouchsafe His grace that they might live, persist, and remain in the harmony of the holy Christian faith, and thereby attain to the way of everlasting salvation.

CHAPTER VI

CONTINUED POLITICO-RELIGIOUS AGITATORS—DECAY OF INTELLECTUAL AND PHILANTHROPIC LIFE

In the *Reichsabschied*[1] of the Diet of Nuremberg there had been no question of any separation from Rome and the Catholic Church. Had subsequent proceedings been in accordance with the transactions of Diet, there the would have been no split in the German nation.

But the Reichsregiment violated itself the imperial decrees, and allowed others to violate them with impunity: the Elector of Saxony and other princes, and most of the free cities, acted in open defiance of them. Least of all did Luther trouble himself about their decisions. Backed up by the force of the revolution he was, as it were, Dictator in Saxony.

The notables of the Empire had promised at the Diet of Nuremberg to use all diligence to prevent Luther and his adherents from publishing any fresh writings before the proposed Council was summoned; libellous pamphlets especially they undertook to stop by severely penal measures. But for Luther 'there are no such things as commands, come they whence they may,' wrote Duke George of Saxony, 'and those whose

[1] The *Reichsabschied*, or *Reichstagsabschied*, was the record of the transactions at the Diet drawn up just before the close of the meeting.

duty it is to see that orders are executed are too dilatory, faint-hearted, or incapable: thus all the world is free to abuse and defy with impunity the Pope and the bishops, the Emperor and the princes.' When Luther, in a letter to Duke George, once called the latter a liar and a shameful blasphemer of evangelical truth, and Hans von Planitz, the minister of the Saxon Elector, reproved him for his violent language, Luther wrote in self-justification that he had never attacked the Duke as fiercely as the Pope, the bishops, and the King of England; on the contrary it was his opinion that he had spared him 'far too much,' 'for such a ranting tyrant,' he said, 'ought to have been severely tackled by him long ago.'

'I know well, moreover, that all my writings have been of such a nature that they have seemed at first as if they came straight from the Devil, and everybody was afraid the heavens would soon fall down, but afterwards they saw differently. Times have now changed, and the great heads are being attacked, as they were never wont to be, and what God has in his counsels He will show in his own good time.'

Pope Adrian VI. was certainly assailed by Luther more fiercely than the Duke had been. After Adrian had consecrated Bishop Benno of Meissen, on May 31, 1523, Luther published his pamphlet against 'the new idol and the old devil that was to be set up at Meissen.' 'The living Satan,' he said in this pamphlet, 'in mockery of God, lets himself be rigged out in gold and silver and stuck up and worshipped.' God allowed such things in his wrath, so that stiff-necked and blinded tyrants and persecutors, like the Pope and his crew, who will not hear the gospel for their salvation,

nor will tolerate it, should 'to their damnation believe in the lies and the mighty errors and the works of the Devil.' He called the Pope 'a hypocrite and the worst enemy of God.' This libellous pamphlet went through six editions.

It had been decreed at the Nuremberg Diet that priests who married, and monks or nuns who left their cloisters, were to forfeit their privileges and their benefices.

Luther, on the other hand, issued, on March 28, 1523, an appeal to the Knights of the Teutonic Order, telling them that 'they ought to break their vows, to get married, and to divide the property of the Order among themselves.' 'In the first place,' he says, 'your Order will have the advantage of being provided with secular food, and you may distribute the estates among the several knights, and make them settlers on the land, and officials, and otherwise, and there will not be the same wretched need which now keeps many mendicant friars and other monks in the cloisters, viz. the wants of the stomach. There need be no fear that the knights of your Order will be in danger of being attacked for such proceedings.' 'I have little doubt,' he says to them, 'that many bishops also, and many abbots and other ecclesiastical dignitaries, would marry, if it were not that they were afraid of being the first, and if the example had once been set, and if such marrying had become common, so that there was no longer any disgrace or danger about it, but it was considered honourable and praiseworthy in the sight of the world. You ought to disregard the tradition and set a worthy example. Behold, now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation. God's

Word shines forth and calls to you. You have reason and inducement to obey, and plenty of this world's goods. 'There is nothing that hinders you in this, except the insane world's insane judgment, which may perchance cry out: "Ah! do the Teutonic knights act thus?" But since we know that the prince of this world is condemned, we need not doubt that this and all other judgments of the world are already condemned in the sight of God.'

If it be alleged that the vow of celibacy was 'an old tradition in the time of the Apostles, preached and confirmed by numbers of synods and holy Fathers,' that is all child's fooling. God has said: 'I will that thou shouldest have a help meet for thee and not be alone,' and God is 'older than all synods and holy fathers.' So, too, God is greater and mightier than all Councils and Fathers. Item, the angels all abide by God and the Scriptures. Item, this custom of marriage came down to us from Adam, and is older than the custom introduced by the popes.' They must not wait for a future Council and its decisions. He actually put in writing the following words: 'Were it to come to pass that one, two, a hundred, a thousand, and even more councils settled that the clergy might marry, or gave them leave to do whatever else God's Word has already allowed, I should be more inclined to look leniently upon, and commend to the mercy of God, the man who all his life long had kept one, two, or three harlots than on him who took to himself a lawful wife simply on the strength of the decree of the Council, but would not dare to do so without its consent; and I would also, in the name of God, enjoin and advise all that at the risk of his soul's salvation, none should take

a wife on the strength of such a decree, but should live on in chastity, and, if this were impossible to him, that he should not despair in his weakness and sinfulness, but should call on God to help him.'

In another missive of April 10, 1523, 'Reasons why Young Women may leave their Convents,' he called Leonhard Koppe, citizen of Torgau, a 'holy robber,' because, incited by Luther's pronouncement, he had rescued nine nuns (Catharine von Bora amongst them) from their convent; just as Christ, he said, was a robber in the world because by his death he had robbed the prince of this world of his armour and his goods.' All who were on the side of God would look upon the theft of the nuns as an act of great piety, for they would be certain that it was God who had ordered it, and that it was not the work or the counsel of man. In a letter to the *Reichsregiment* he said in August 1523 that it was impossible to keep vows. 'Who that had vowed to fly like a bird could keep his vow, unless God worked a miracle for him? In like manner it is going too far when a man or a woman vows chastity. For they are not made for chastity, but, as God says, to increase and multiply.'

'For this command that God has given, "Increase and multiply," is more than a mere command; it is a divine work which it does not lie with us to hinder or neglect, but is absolutely necessary . . . even more necessary than eating and drinking, sleeping and waking.' Without a special call from God, nobody has a right to run counter to the command to 'increase and multiply,' no, not though he should have sworn ten oaths or vows.

It was the duty of priests, monks, and nuns to break

their vows. 'Nuns and monks who are without faith, and who rely on their chastity and their orders, are not worthy to rock a baptised child in its cradle, or to make its pap, even were it a child of adultery. Reason: because your Order and your life have not the warrant of God's Word, and you cannot claim that you are pleasing God by what you are doing.'

Luther now felt his position so strong that he could even afford to disregard the commands of the Elector of Saxony. Frederic had ordered that in the cathedral church at Wittenberg the holy mass was still to be read, and the service of the Catholic Church generally adhered to. But in Luther's eyes this Church service was 'idolatrous abomination.' He therefore directed the canons of the cathedral on July 11, 1523, to have the abomination done away with; for, he said, this was not the least of the causes why God's Word was so weak among them and brought forth so little fruit.'

If they refused to obey he would refuse them the name of Christians. What the Elector had commanded mattered not in the least, for it was here a question of conscience. As the canons, protected by the Elector, paid no attention to Luther's orders, he afterwards wrote them a threatening letter. 'Whereas I perceive,' he said, 'that our great patience, which we have hitherto shown towards your devilish proceedings and idolatry in your churches, is of no avail, but only augments and strengthens your audacity and wickedness . . . I now make a friendly request and earnest prayer to you that you would make an end of all your rotten performances, and do away with masses, vigils, and everything that is opposed to the Gospel and to our

commands, so that our conscience before God and our name before the world may be established as of those who are minded to shun and flee from your diabolical community. Should you, however, refuse to do this, I give you to understand that I shall not rest, so help me God, till you have been forced to do it. So, then, make up your minds, and let me have a straightforward immediate answer, Yes or No, for this next Sunday.'[1] Thus, then, the 'evangelical freedom' proclaimed by Luther meant for the cathedral canons that they were to change their faith against their wills and become adherents of his gospel. Luther could not in this case make use of the magistracy as an instrument for carrying his threat into execution, for the Elector was on the side of the canons; he would only have had the support of the populace. The canons, however, did not let the matter come to the trial of force. Luther gained his end; the Catholic Church service was abolished at Wittenberg.

'According to you all means are lawful for the spreading of your heresies,' wrote a clerical controversialist in answer to Luther; 'but you say it is unnecessary for you to perform miracles, by which I presume you mean that you could work miracles if it pleased you to do so. And now you are playing upon the superstitious belief of the people in so-called miraculous portents, in order to incense them against the Pope and the Church.'

This was actually the case. Luther and Melanchthon in their fight against the Church encouraged the belief of the people in all manner of signs and portents, tokens

[1] Letters edited by De Wette, ii. 354–356, 565. See Kolde's *Friedrich der Weise*, pp. 65–68.

in the heavens and miraculous births on earth. For example, the river Tiber was said to have thrown up, in the neighbourhood of Rome, a monstrous animal 'which had the head of an ass, the breast and trunk of a woman, one foot like that of an ox, an elephant's foot on its right arm, fishes' scales on its legs, and a dragon's head behind it;[1] another prodigy, the abortion of a cow, a creature half monk and half calf, had been born at Waltersdorf, near Freiberg, in Meissen. These monstrosities excited the terror of the people, and Luther and Melanchthon made it their business to explain their meaning. In the year 1523 they circulated several editions of an illustrated 'Interpretation of the Two Monstrous Figures, the Pope-Ass at Rome and the Monk-Calf in Meissen.'

'Even as Daniel had predicted the rule of the Roman Antichrist, so that all true Christians knew how to guard themselves against its roguery,' so now, said Melanchthon in his 'Interpretation of the *Papstesel*,[2] for the same ends 'many signs were vouchsafed by God; in the monster at Rome God himself had counterfeited the monstrosity of the Pontificate. The ass's head signified the Pope; the elephant's foot his spiritual rule, with which he trampled down, tortured, and martyred the souls of men and women; the ox's hoof meant the servants of the Pope, 'the papal teachers, preachers, pastors, and confessors, but most especially the scholastic theologians.'

'For all these accursed people do nothing else than drive the unendurable laws of the Pope into the poor

[1] Further details about the Roman monster found in the time of Alexander VI. are given by Pastor in his *History of the Popes*, iii. 345.

[2] Wenzel von Olmütz executed the copper engraving (now so rare which is known under the name of the *Papstesel*.

people's heads with their preaching, teaching, and confessionals, and thus hold their miserable consciences captive under the elephant's foot, and are therefore the pillars, the feet, and the foundation of the papacy, which otherwise could not have stood so long. For the scholastic theology is nothing but empty, idle, lying, cursed monkish invention and babble.' 'The woman's breast and trunk,' Melanchthon goes on, 'are the cardinals, bishops, priests, monks, students, and such-like whoremongers. . .' 'The fishes' scales signify the secular princes and lords, who hang on to the papacy and its government; justify and excuse its existence, as if it were ordained by God; promote its spiritual and mundane sovereignty; preserve its intolerable laws, doctrines, and canons, and protect its worldly possessions; besides which they found cloisters, institutions, universities, and churches, in which such teachers, preachers, father confessors, doctors, canonists, and theologians carry on their business indefatigably, so that it may stand fast and be firmly established.' But the head at the back shows 'that the papacy is drawing near its end,' and that it is doomed to wax old and perish of itself without the agency of human hands. 'Hereby I would have every one be warned,' Melanchthon concludes, 'that they must not disregard so great a sign from God, but should beware of this accursed Antichrist, and of his hangers-on—that is to say, of the secular princes also who were adherents of the Pope.'

Luther later on subscribed a hearty 'Amen' to the 'Interpretation.' 'There was nothing so very terrible in the *Papstesel*,' he said, 'for it was God Himself who had made these wonders and prodigies.' 'The whole

world,' he said, 'ought to tremble and be affrighted, not at the monsters so much, but because it was the High Divine Majesty itself which had created and exhibited them, in order that men might see what were the thoughts in God's mind. But everybody was terrified at a ghost or a devil, or a rumbling noise in a corner, which was mere child's play compared with the horrors against which God was thus openly manifesting his anger.'

'As the *Papstesel* signified the fall of the Pontificate,' Luther explained, 'so the *Mönchskalb* meant the fall of monasticism; it was plainly declared by this calf that God was the enemy of monkhood.' The stiff-necked priests, however, would not accept this interpretation, 'but persisted more and more obstinately in their evil courses and in refusing to recognise the truth and to reform their lives.' 'As Balaam, when he did not listen to God's Word, was at last reproved by his own donkey, and yet did not turn from his evil ways, so our spiritual fathers, whereas they have hitherto closed their ears, like the deaf adders, against the plain truth of the Gospel, are now made to behold with their eyes, in this calf and donkey, as it were in a glass, how they appear in the sight of God, and what is thought of them in heaven.[1]

'In all these miracles' God was giving them to understand 'that a great calamity and change was in

[1] *Collected Works*, 29, 2–16. Luther's letter to Wenzel Link of January 16, 1523, helps to explain these last words: 'Unum monstrorum ego interpretor, modo omissa generali interpretatione monstrorum, quae significant *certo rerum-publicarum mutationem per bella potissimum.* Quo et mihi non est dubium *Germaniae portendi vel summam belli calamitatem vel extremum diem*: ego tantum versor in particulari interpretatione, quae ad monachos pertinet.' (See German original, vol. ii. 17th and 18th ed., p. 305, for further notes about these portents.)

store, " which indeed all Germany must be aware of." But how and by whom it would be brought about, it was the business of the prophets to foretell.' The evangelical light, which had risen with such splendour had been followed by a great change. The prophets—that is to say, the astrologers—had long predicted from the many 'signs and wonders in heaven and earth' a general insurrection of the people in the year 1524, and a *Bundschuh* which would spread over town and country.

'The populace in the towns and the peasants in the provinces will inevitably rise in rebellion,' wrote Cochlaeus in the year 1523, 'even if they are not summoned to seize muskets and hoes and set to work to hack and destroy. They are poisoned by the innumerable abusive pamphlets and speeches which are printed and declaimed among them against both papal and secular authority, against every one, indeed, who has any power and wealth, and who will not renounce the faith of our fathers. Luther says himself that his gospel cannot be preached without tumult and insurrection, and casts all manner of opprobrium on the faith of his fathers and of his own youth.'

'I make bold to say,' writes Cochlaeus elsewhere to Luther, 'that not even by the Emperor Julian was our faith so greatly vilified and reviled as it is now in the scurrilous writings of yourself and your adherents,' which are circulated in such thousands by the printing press in all towns and provinces—yea, in every remote corner of the land.' 'A general alarm has been sounded of the *Bundschuh* which is imminent, and in very deed they must be prepared for this rising, which must shatter all existing institutions. Luther intended to

enrich the poor and the starving by means of a *Bundschuh*; he would give them the first pick of the plunder taken from the nobility, and of all the cloisters, field-churches, and pilgrim-shrines. Verily if he wins the game they will carry off a goodly share of booty.

'I am aware that unhappily great abuses are perpetrated by the clergy; but that is not a reason for abolishing churches and cloisters. On this principle all the princes' courts would have to be swept away, for not one of them is so pure as to be untarnished by any abuse. That, perhaps, is what you would like to bring about by a *Bundschuh*; but how if it should be necessary to do away with all artisans and with all classes of mankind whatever? Show me one single guild, handicraft, government, class, system, which is entirely free from all abuse. You want to palm off your heresies by abusing the sins and the scandals of the clergy, and in this manner you seek you ingratiate yourself with the people. Do you suppose that either Emser or myself wish to excuse or defend the sins and wickedness of the clergy? God save us, we would far rather help you to root them out, as far as it can be done legitimately or we can do anything in the matter. But Christ does not teach such methods as you are carrying on so offensively with "Antichrist," "brothels," "devils' nests," "cesspools," and other unheard-of terms of abuse, not to speak of your theatenings of sword, bloodshed, and murder. O Luther, you were never taught this method of working by Christ; for he was meek and lowly of heart. For, see, you speak all manner of slanderous words openly before all the world, before Christians, Hussites, and Jews, in many thousand pamphlets, not

only against your own brethren but also against our common fathers, against the most high priest of God; and yet with it all you are doing nothing for the good or improvement of a single human being. You are only causing much offence among the people, many hundred thousand sins of backbiting and deriding. Moreover you are mixing up a great deal of heresy with your teaching, and are spoiling all your cause by your unwarrantable and unchristian plan for abolishing churches and cloisters.' Luther, he proceeds, found actual supporters only among 'poets, troopers, haters of priests,' and 'poor Conrads,' who set their hopes on a *Bundschuh*. For the others Luther's teaching had no weight: 'The Lutherans only went with their Luther so far as he inveighed strongly against the priests and the wealthy merchants. If by means of this *Bundschuh* they could snatch the possessions of the clergy and the money, the rents and fortunes of the rich burghers, then they would be quite ready to settle down and be Christians, like their parents before them.

'Although Luther himself,' writes Carl von Bodmann, '(possibly in order that he may thereby justify himself with his Elector) says repeatedly in his writings that the common people must not be allowed to take up the sword, the contents of his pamphlets are, nevertheless, of a nature to stir up their angry passions, and incite them to armed insurrection. And considering their immense circulation, and all the means employed to disseminate them, there can be no other result than an insurrection and a complete overthrow of all social and political order. Bishops and other spiritual overseers are, in Luther's eyes, robbers and murderers whose

authority must be abolished, and who must themselves be expelled. But what sort of a Church system does he mean to erect on the ruins of the old? Anything so extraordinary as Luther's scheme no heretic has ever yet propounded. Each one is to build up his creed out of the Scriptures for himself; each one is to decide for himself whether the doctrine presented to him is right or not. Universal caprice will be the result; endless controversies will arise; sects of all sorts will spring up and will contend one against another.'

Emser said in the year 1524, in the dedication to the Emperor of his 'Warning against Ecclesiastics falsely so called and that Archheretic Luther:' 'We Christians are no longer called Christians by these heretics, but "papists;" and the illustrious members of your imperial nobility, the Electors, archbishops, bishops, and princes of the Holy Empire, who stand firm in their allegiance to the Roman Church, and in obedience to your Majesty, are scandalously abused, despised, persecuted, and set one against the other.' 'All Christian members and loyal subjects of the Holy Empire,' he says in the preface to this pamphlet, 'must be deeply grieved at the cruel, unchristian abuse and insults with which that blasphemer at Wittenberg, who gives himself out for an ecclesiastic, prophet, and evangelist, has so grossly belaboured our dear and most venerable fathers and rulers, his Papal Holiness, his Imperial Majesty, the princes and bishops of the Holy Roman Empire. In some of his latest publications he insolently prides himself on having startled their Papal and Imperial Majesties like a donkey from whose back a sack has fallen; and he calls the whole body of bishops donkeys, impostors, jackanapes, and murderers

of souls; he calls the princes of the Imperial Council at Nuremberg fools and blasphemers of God; and exclaims in public: "*Claus Narr* would have managed the business quite as well as they did." I will keep silence concerning the other coarse and abominable words with which this shameless tongue has wounded modest ears and sensitive hearts.' From all this 'it was plain to see' that 'Luther was no true ecclesiastic and prophet, but one of those of whom Christ says: "Beware of the false prophets."'

Emser then proceeds to prove by twenty signs that Luther is a 'false ecclesiastic.'

Among these 'twenty signs' are the following: Real prophets, apostles, and preachers 'do not vaunt themselves,' as does Luther. He will allow no one to count for anything but himself; he despises and dishonours the dead and the living, boasts that no 'Doctors' or early Fathers ever understood or preached the Gospel rightly until he came. Again and again Emser draws attention to the way in which Luther contradicts himself; now complaining that he had been condemned as a heretic without having been tried or confuted, and that he could not obtain justice from the bishops; and now declaring that he will not be tried by any one on earth, and will not be judged either by men or by angels. 'Now I should like to know,' he adds, 'how one is to get at justice with a man who will tolerate no judge either of heaven or of earth!'

'Luther sought the favour and friendship of the world, which was no sign of a true prophet. He had drawn almost half the world to his cause—'namely, the immoral priests whom he allowed, or rather commanded, to marry; item, wives for whom he had made the con-

jugal bond very easy; item, monks and nuns oppressed by their rules, to whom he had given leave to escape from their cloisters in spite of their oaths and vows, so that he, like the Queen of Cyprus, might not be blamed alone; item, the nobility to whom he had addressed his programme of reform, licensing them as it were to use the sword, of which they were the votaries; item, the common people, whom he is helping to get their freedom, and to whom he says: "A free Christian should not be subject to any man or to any law," thus "putting cushions under all their heads," and enticing them to himself with flattery and caresses.'

'True prophets, apostles, and preachers,' he goes on, 'exhort the people by their teaching and preaching to peace and concord;' false prophets, on the other hand, 'teach the populace that they ought to wash their hands in the blood of the priests. Yes, verily, says Luther: "If a violent insurrection came about, and the pope and the bishops were exterminated, it would only be matter for laughter;" he even threatens them openly with destruction; if he lives they shall have no peace from him; if he dies they will have still less peace, for after his death he will wound them with great wounds.'

Emser deals especially with the leading article of the Lutheran doctrine of justification through faith alone; he refutes it and establishes, from the evidence of Holy Writ, the Catholic doctrine of good works, to which also, he says, all true prophets and apostles have always exhorted the people.'

Without faith, of course, there were no good works. 'Faith must exist above all things, and must be present in the first instance, for without faith no good work

is pleasing to God.' But if the good works accomplished by reason of faith, and out of Christian love are not meritorious and profitable for eternal life, why had Christ taught, 'Whosoever gives a cup of cold water in my name shall not lose his reward'? Why did he say that at the Day of Judgment he should say to his elect: 'Come, ye blessed of my Father. I was thirsty, and ye gave me to drink,' and so forth? If, then, such a small thing as giving a cup of water had its reward from God, what would not those pious devoted servants of the cloisters deserve who underwent penance religiously, and mortified their bodies and their lives for the love of God? How great would be the reward of parents who, with toil and care, diligently brought up their children in virtue and the service of God; of faithful domestics and obedient subjects who for the love of God served their lords and masters loyally, obediently, and industriously; of sovereigns and all in authority who governed those under them conscientiously, and faithfully shielded and befriended them. *Summa summarum*, there is no estate or condition in Christendom which is not meritorious if it be rightly fulfilled and if the duties attached to it are performed faithfully and diligently for love of and faith in God. Those who are now preaching that our good works are only tributes of gratitude, and neither meritorious nor necessary for everlasting salvation, are a pack of heretics, and false prophets, who are preaching against the Christian Church and its teachers. It is, however, true, that for all our good works which we accomplish we ought to praise and thank God, without whose grace and help we cannot begin or finish anything that is good. But, this done, every

work still possesses its own value and merit, as fasting, praying, almsgiving, and so forth; and each one has its reward to be expected from God, so that the lowly will be exalted and the mourners will be comforted, those who hunger and thirst after righteousness will be satisfied; and all who do or suffer anything for the love of God will receive their due reward, as the Lord says to them: 'Rejoice and be of good cheer, for great is your reward in heaven.' And that is sound catholic and evangelical truth.[1]

Emser returns in several passages to the 'significance of good works for salvation,' and also to the refutation of the Lutheran teaching against monastic vows. Luther, he says, preaches that these vows are contrary to the command of God, because monks and nuns 'base their vows on unbelief; for they set themselves up against God and flatter themselves that they will be saved by their works in their own way, which is a Jewish belief and contrary to the first, second, and third commandments.' 'On this point,' says Emser, 'Luther harps continually, like a musician who can strum only one tune on his instrument. But, as I have often said before, we do not dishonour God with good works, but with bad ones, and the clergy do not put their trust in their works as

[1] The Church doctrine of good works was a most frequent theme of the apologetic and polemic writings published for the people. Two little treatises by the Dominican Johann Dietenberger of the years 1523 and 1524 are real masterpieces in this respect, as well for the present day as for the times in which they were written. The titles are *Ob der Glaubi allein selig mache* and *Ob die Christen mögen durch ihre gute Werke das Himmelreich verdienen* ('Whether Belief is sufficient for Salvation' and 'Whether Christians can attain to the Kingdom of Heaven through their Good Works'). (For further reference to religious writings of Dietenberger see note at p. 311, vol. ii., of Janssen—German original, 17th and 18th ed.)

if it was their works that saved them, but they look upon good works as a means and a way to salvation. For just as God does not let the corn grow in the fields for us without our labour and toil, so He will not give us heaven unless we earn it by forsaking evil and doing good. If we only consider what are the things that the priests praise—chastity, voluntary poverty, obedience, prayer, fasting, vigils, singing praises to God—they are all excellent things, even if done by Jews or heathens! So, then, if the clergy and the "religious" do all these things in the name and faith of Christ, and for his sake, they do not thereby act against the first, second, and third commandments of God, and it cannot be called a Jewish belief. For the Jews do not believe at all in Christ, and they are not now condemned on account of the aforesaid works, but on account of their unbelief. The pious, holy, children of God must not be distressed because Luther so often calls them "judaic" and "Jews," in which moreover he unwittingly, like Caiaphas, speaks the truth; for they are not real Jews who are so outwardly in the flesh, but they who, as St. Paul says, have the true circumcision of the heart.'

In every condition of life we find 'proud, avaricious, dissolute, obstinate, irreligious, God-forgetting people;' therefore 'it is no wonder that now in every religious Order some are falling off and forsaking their cloisters; for, as the old proverb says, whenever the Devil wants to accomplish something great, he makes use of a monk or a wicked old woman.' Luther was enticing monks and nuns from their cloisters and promising them freedom, 'but they would none the less have to be the bond-servants of the whole world; for

some of them would be made to carry stones to build walls, some to sweep rooms, some to be common scavengers, and whatever nobody else liked doing, these poor people would have to do, just as the Israelites in Egypt had to fetch the straw for the bricks. 'Come back, come back, ye lost and erring brothers and sisters,' exclaims Emser to these renegades, 'put on again your first stoles, so that not we only, but the angels also in heaven may rejoice over your repentance.'[1]

The true prophets and apostles, he goes on, are known by the good fruits they bring forth; they are humble, patient, obedient, chaste, pious, and God-fearing. The false prophets and preachers, on the other hand, bring forth bad fruits: 'they make the people haughty, defiant, arrogant, self-willed, stiff-necked, disobedient, impatient, criminal, blasphemous, warlike, envious, profligate, sensual and gluttonous, and despisers of God. For we now see daily before our eyes how the young generation, in the course of three or four years, has abundantly put forth such fruits, and, alas! become so corrupted by them that now no servants will any longer obey their masters or mistresses, no child its father, no subjects their rulers; they fear neither God nor man, despise all commands, all laws, all Christian rules, so that Plato even—I say nothing of Christ—would not have tolerated them in his community.' Never before amongst the German nation have such disturbance, tumult, and sedition been experienced as Luther has introduced with his false doctrine.

[1] See Dietenberger's pamphlet, *Wider* 139 *Schlussreden Martin Luther's von Gelübdniss und geistl. Leben.*

'And would to God that he had only led the poor populace astray, and not also set kings and princes in arms against each other, to produce even greater misery! For if only the princes and rulers were of one mind they might be able to suppress the errors and the contumacy of the people; but he feared that Luther was the man of whom it was written, that he would lay waste the whole earth, and upset kingdoms and principalities and devastate and destroy them.'

No joyful tidings could be recognised in Luther's teaching, although his followers represented themselves as evangelists. 'If the Lutherans were asked whether they were believers, or whether they were Christians or Lutherans, they answered that they were evangelical, which no doubt was true, if they were speaking of Luther's gospel, for, just as far as that was an evangel, so were they evangelical. But if they meant our evangel—authenticated and believed in by the Church—then their words, ways, and works agree as much with it as black does with white, fire with water, light with darkness; for very little good tidings and good things are heard from them or proclaimed by them.'

Luther's opinions, publicly declaimed, on conjugal life and sexual relations contributed indeed largely to the marked decay of morals among the people. Emser devotes a special chapter to this subject, and bewails the 'unchristian desecration of holy matrimony,' and feels himself compelled to remind his readers 'that Christ, and Paul, and all Christian teachers, from the very beginning of the Church down to the present day, have always enjoined purity and chastity of body and soul.'

'O ye worthy Germans and pious Christians,' exclaims Emser, 'supplicate and pray, I exhort you, that ye may stand fast in the faith of your fathers and may in no way let yourselves be led astray by this new Jeroboam. For all his teachings aim at this: that he would turn you and your children from these two highest Christian virtues—namely, your ancient faith and your obedience to your rulers.'

'The heretics are putting into the heads of the people that they are no longer to give offerings, tribute-money, tithes, and other rightful dues to Pope, bishops, priests, and monks, and that furthermore they are to take from them all that they possess. Dear friends, why do they advise this? You may well imagine that if the priests are no longer to have any payments they will no longer be able to pray, preach, administer sacraments, and do other things which appertain to their office, and which are needful for the salvation of a Christian people.' 'But how could the heretics have devised a more subtle plan for rooting out Christianity than by abolishing priests, masses, church, altar, sacraments, and all Christian rites, so that all our consolation and hope of salvation should be withdrawn from us, and each one should begin to live as he pleases, and he that is the strongest push the other against the wall? But the foolish people know no better, and think that if they can only persecute and get rid of the priests, all will be rectified, and do not consider what wretched misery they will be plunged into if the counsel of the heretics has its way.' 'O ye pious Germans, take heed unto this warning.'

'I know well what attacks, threats, and danger I myself have suffered already for this cause even from

those who were formerly my best friends. But as through it all I have felt no hatred for them, so also I have never committed any wrong or offence against any of them; in like manner I admonish you all that you bear them no hatred or ill-will; for he that hateth his brother is a murderer in the sight of God and deserving of judgment. Moreover the greater number of them are acting in ignorance, because hitherto they have not rightly understood the matter, and have been misled and deceived; and if, in course of time, they are rightly instructed in the truth, they will, without doubt, draw back again from Luther. But it is my earnest advice that you and all who do not wish to be poisoned with false doctrine should avoid Luther's books; for though he sometimes introduces somewhat of good, there is nevertheless so much poison that it destroys and neutralizes the good.'

'From the above little book,' says Emser at the end to the Emperor, 'your Majesty will learn to what extent crime and insolent audacity is being fostered among us Germans by Luther's false teaching, and how we are being led away not only from our ancient faith, but from all submission to Your Majesty and to Christian authority, so that all classes quake and tremble.'

Like Emser, too, the Dominican Johann Dietenberger saw clearly in the year 1523 what would be the consequence in Germany of the overthrow of all ecclesiastical, political, and social order. 'At present,' he writes, 'the Empire is still firmly and strongly established,' but alarming symptoms of its decay and of division among the people were manifesting themselves. 'O thou land of Germany, whoso

within thee hath ears to hear, let him hear. . . . God in His mercy forfend that thy members should murder one another in dissension, should burn, devastate, and destroy each other's lives, property, and honour! This I fear God will send upon you as a judgment and punishment for your discord; this visitation, that one German shall miserably strangle another, that brother shall murder brother, that neighbours and friends shall put an end to each other, that one prince shall rise against another, one town against another, till the strength of your limbs has grown weak and sickly and is wholly undone. These are the things which I greatly fear for thee in the future.'

A natural result of these religious disturbances was a general and rapid decay of intellectual life.

Within a few years the universities were observed to deteriorate, with a rapidity as astonishing as it was lamentable; 'for the students,' so people complained in the year 1524, 'are no longer interested in serious studies; they occupy themselves solely with religious strife and disputation; they read, write, and disseminate little treatises and pamphlets; they are degenerating into coarseness and immorality, and at the same time they declare that they are the messengers of new wisdom and the reformers of public life.'

Luther had denounced the universities as dens of murderers, temples of Moloch, synagogues of corruption; in a sermon preached in the year 1521, of which several editions were published, he had actually gone the length of saying that 'the universities were only worthy of being reduced to dust; nothing more hellish or devilish had ever appeared on the earth from the beginning of things, or ever would appear.' Me-

lanchthon also, in a pamphlet against Emser in the year 1521, said: 'Never had anything more corrupt or godless been invented than the universities; not the popes but the Devil himself was their originator; Wickliffe had been the first to recognise that the universities were schools of Satan; could he have said anything wiser or more godly? The Jews offered up youths to Moloch, and at the universities young men were offered up to pagan idols.' 'A man who boasts the title of philosopher cannot be called a Christian.'

In Luther's case, and at that time in Melanchthon's also, this bitterness against the universities was closely connected with hatred of philosophy, and of its introduction, in any way, into religion. They hated the universities because these had always exalted 'the light of nature' and held up the reason as a suitable instrument for the discovery of religious truth, and had attempted a reconciliation between religion and science. Melanchthon soon abated the violence of his sentiments, but Luther, to the end of his life, held firmly to the opinion that 'reason was the Devil's bride, rationalism a beautiful prostitute . . . who must be trampled under foot with all her wisdom, who must be put to death, who must have dirt thrown in her face to make her repulsive-looking.'

Preachers innumerable spoke in similar accents. They poured themselves out in virulent abuse against all enlightened knowledge and all secular learning.

But the heaviest blow of all was struck at the humanistic learning and studies, which before the beginning of the religious controversies had developed to such splendid blossoming that 'Cicero would soon

have had to hide his diminished head,' but which now had dwindled down till scarce a trace of their pristine bloom was left. 'Wherever Lutheranism prevails,' wrote Erasmus to Pirkheimer, 'learning and liberal culture go to the ground.' 'They care for two things only—to get a place and a wife. Moreover their Gospel gives them liberty to live according to their pleasure.'

'Under the cloak of the Gospel,' wrote the humanist Eobanus Hessus from Erfurt in the year 1523, 'the escaped monks here are suppressing all the fine arts. In their destructive sermons they rob honourable studies of all credit in order to foist their own nonsense on the world as wisdom. Our university is quite deserted; we are utterly despised.' 'So low have we sunk,' he laments to his friend Camerarius, 'that only the memory of our former prosperity is left us; the hope of ever reviving it has completely disappeared.' 'Our school has gone to ruin,' says Euricius Cordus in a letter to his friend Draconites in 1523, 'and amongst the students there reigns a spirit of lawlessness which could not be greater among soldiers in a camp; it makes me miserable to live here.' 'How sadly has learning decayed among us!' writes at the same time the humanist Michael Nossen; 'none can see, without tears of grief, how all zeal for learning and virtue has vanished from the place. I dread nothing so much as that, when the foundations of learning and science have been destroyed, all piety also will go to ruin, and a reign of barbarism set in, which will completely annihilate every remnant of religion and culture.'

'Nobody would have believed it,' says the Dean of the Erfurt Philosophical Faculty in a report of 1523, 'if

any one had predicted that in a short time our university would have fallen so low that scarcely a shadow of its former lustre would remain. The affairs of the university are handled in the pulpits in such a way that scarcely anything escapes slander which was formerly held in veneration.' 'All liberal studies are trodden contemptuously under foot,' writes the rector of the university; 'academic honours have become an object of hatred.'

'But what wonder,' he adds, 'that such things should happen to the schools, when not even the religion which has commanded veneration through so many centuries is secure against calumny? Verily, for our sins we have merited that it should now be permitted to factious partisans to assail all things with impunity, just as it pleases them, so that scarcely anything is respected nowadays but what was formerly held in contempt.'

From year to year the numbers both of teachers and students decreased in Erfurt; hardly any one was to be found who was willing to accept an academical post. Between May 1520 and 1521 as many as 311 students had matriculated; in the following year the number sank to 120, in the year 1522 to 72, and in 1523 and 1524 it fell to 34.

A similar decline in scientific studies took place in Wittenberg. Melanchthon in a letter to Eobanus in 1523 says: 'I see that you are as much grieved as I am at the falling off in our studies, which but a short time ago were so flourishing, and are now beginning to droop again. Those who object to profane branches of learning do not, believe me, think much better of theological studies.' Later on, simultaneously with the

publication of his pamphlets, Melanchthon wrote: 'If that golden age had indeed come which in the blossoming stage of learning we had dared to hope for, my writings would have been brighter and more cheerful; but the impending schism, which came soon after, cast its dark shadow over all my work.' He had 'begun his studies so joyously,' but already in the year 1524 he was sighing and moaning in the midst of the religious disturbances: 'I am living here as in a desert. I have scarcely any intercourse with any but narrow minds, in which I find no pleasure; therefore I sit at home like a lame cobbler.' 'I have no one here,' he says in another letter, 'who is in sympathy with me, or like-minded, and am reduced to what Plato calls "wolf friendships," which are full of anxiety and painfulness.' His efforts for the revival of liberal culture in Wittenberg were completely shipwrecked.[1] In his private letters he had no hesitation in attributing to the Wittenberg theologians the responsibility of the contempt of learning.

The other North German universities, such as Leipzig and Rostock, also sank in importance from year to year. At Rostock, where formerly about 300 students had matriculated every year, the number in 1524 was reduced to 38, and in 1525 to 15.[2]

The same melancholy picture was presented by the South German universities, such as Basle, Heidelberg, Freiburg. From Basle comes the following wail in 1524: 'The university is as though dead and buried.

[1] His Letters in the *Corp. Reform.* i. 575, 604, 613, 679, 683, 695, 726, 894. See the treatise 'Reformation and Literature' in the *Histor.-polit. Blätter*, xix. 259; Döllinger, *Reformation*, i. 354; Paulsen, pp. 135–138.

[2] See Döllinger's *Reformation*, i. 575; Paulsen, p. 141.

Empty are the chairs of the teachers, and empty the benches of the learners.' In the year 1522 only 29 new students were entered, and in 1526 only 5. In Heidelberg in the year 1525 there were more professors than students.[1] 'I have scarcely six regular attendants at my lectures, wrote Ulrich Zasius, the most famous of all professors of law, from Freiburg in 1523, 'and these moreover are Frenchmen.' 'I carry on my lecturing with great assiduity, though I never know if I shall have any, or what, audience; but the post is wellnigh hateful to me, for the science of law has come to be treated with such contempt.'

'There is a remarkable dearth of students here,' he repeats in 1524, 'and I see no hope of improvement.' The University of Vienna, which under the Emperor Maximilian had been one of the first universities of Europe, with its hundreds of professors and frequent yearly tale of seven thousand students, had sunk gradually to such a pitiful condition, in consequence of the religious disturbances, that it counted, at the time we write of, scarcely a dozen students; the faculty of jurisprudence was obliged to close its lecture-hall for a time on account of the paucity of students.[2]

Wherever the new doctrine could be preached without hindrance, multitudes of preachers worked deliberately for the overthrow of all scientific culture; they set about systematically to build on the ruins

[1] '. . . Universitatem magna ex parte decrescere deflorescereque, in eam pervenisse infelicitatem, ut plures sint professores quam auditores.' See 'Die Berathung und das Gutachten von Rector und Senat' in Hautz's *History of the University of Heidelberg*, p. 390.

[2] In the year 1517 the number of matriculations fell to 667; in 1520 to 569. After 1522 there followed a rapid decline, 'praecipue,' so we read in the *Acts* of the university, 'quia ea tempestate secta Lutherana plerosque a suscipiendis gradibus dehortabatur.'

of ecclesiastical and educational institutions a government by the ignorant mob, under the leadership of clerical demagogues.[1] They proceeded on the same principles which had been proclaimed in the fifteenth century by the Hussite party of the Taborites in Bohemia. 'Whoso studies the liberal arts,' they said, 'or graduates in them, is frivolous and heathenish and a sinner against the Gospel. The "truths" of philosophy and of the liberal arts, even when they are in conformity with the laws of Christ, must not be studied, but set aside as heathenish, and the schools where they are taught must be destroyed.'

'As the present age is the most perturbed of all,' writes Glareamus in 1524 to Wilibald Pirkheimer, 'so I fear that learning and science will soon be lost together with the knowledge of the classical languages, the abolition of which is the great aim of those who boast of resuscitating the pious life, and pride themselves on being the scourgers of the sophists, whereas they are even stupider than these sophists. But how piety is to be revived without true learning, and without knowledge of the Greek language, I can in no wise see. And yet these men assert with much clamouring that it is not necessary to study Latin or Greek; it is enough to understand German and Hebrew. They want to convert Christendom into a second Turkish Empire.' The preachers who preached from their pulpits to inexperienced youths against the dangers of study 'ought,' said Melanchthon in 1524, 'to have their tongues cut out.'

With this general disappearance of the scientific and scholastic spirit, and the love and respect which

[1] Döllinger's *Reformation*, i. 440.

learning had enjoyed before the advent of the new gospel, the German book-trade also began to suffer seriously. After the year 1523 the operations of the great publishers, such as Rynmann at Augsburg and the brothers Atlansee in Vienna, came gradually to a complete standstill; the firm of Froben and Lachner at Basle, which had formerly carried on such a splendid business, became completely paralysed. All the legal regulations of the trade were obliterated; 'literary property was entirely unprotected;' only the hawkers 'did a good business' either in town or country. The latter went about in swarms offering pamphlets, caricatures, and lampoons for sale; in the larger towns vendors of every description of printed matter jostled each other in the streets. In Nuremberg, for instance, side by side with the regular booksellers and publishers, miscellaneous shopkeepers displayed *brochures* for sale, street urchins cried out pamphlets, &c., and foreign hawkers, despite the enactments of the town council, took their stand in the market-place in the very sight of the council-house.[1]

[1] For fuller details on the decline of the book-trade see Kirchhoff, i. 79–102; Hase, pp. 388–391. 'The strongest things that have been written on piracy are to be found in Luther's *Admonition to Printers* (Sept. 1525), cxlvii–cxlviii. Erasmus wrote in the year 1524: 'Apud Germanos, vix quicquam vendibile est praeter Lutherana ac Anti-Lutherana' (*Op.* iii. 824; compare p. 777). 'Frobenius complains to me seriously that he was not selling even a single copy of St. Augustine's *De Civitate Dei*' (Pag. 842). In the *Colloquies* he says: 'Nos Evangelici quatuor res potissimum venamur: ut ventri bene sit, ne quid desit iis, quae sub ventre sunt, tum ut sit, unde vivamus, postremo, ut liceat, quod lubet, agere. Haec si suppetant, inter pocula clamamus: Io Triumphe, Io Paean, vivit Evangelium, regnat Christus.' Compare these and other remarks of Erasmus on the pernicious influence of the new gospel on education, literature, and learning in Döllinger's *Reformation* (2nd ed.), i. 470–472; also Cochlaeus 'on the ruin that befell the German fame for learning in consequence of the religious disturbances,' in Otto, pp. 117, 131.

The same fate which had overtaken the higher branches of study and the seats of learning befell also the inferior national schools, which sank year after year to a lower ebb. 'The schools are beginning to fall to such an extent,' wrote Enoch Widmann in the town chronicle of Hoff, 'that scarcely any people will send their children to school any more, or even allow them to study, because the people have gathered just this much from Luther's writings, that the priests and the learned men have lamentably misled them; thus, everybody has become prejudiced against the priests, and they are everywhere mocked and insulted.'[1] In like manner spoke that zealous Hessian Protestant, Wilhelm Lauze: 'Study and learning have declined and disappeared everywhere, in the towns and in the provinces; schools are deserted, and no parents will any longer allow their children to remain at school.'[2] 'Under the papacy,' so said Veit Dietrich at Nuremberg, 'there had been no measure or stint in giving;' now, however, 'none would open their purses even to give a *Heller* to help the poor churches, the ruined schools, or the needy, destitute, oppressed people.'[3]

Luther himself gave vent to the bitterest complaints on this subject. 'In the German provinces,' he said in 1524 in a missive to the burgomasters and councillors of the different towns, 'the schools are now everywhere allowed to go to ruin.' 'The universities are sinking into disrepute, the cloisters are decreasing in number, the soil is becoming sterile, and the blossoms are withering.' Where cloisters and abbeys

[1] See Döllinger's *Reformation* (2nd ed.), i., 466–467.

[2] *Leben und Thaten Philippi Magnanimi* ('Life and Deeds of Philip the Magnanimous'), i. 141.

[3] Döllinger's *Reformation* (2nd ed.), i., 469.

have been established nobody 'will any longer let their children learn and study.' 'If,' they say, 'the status of the clerics is to become of no account, we will let learning also alone and not trouble ourselves about it any more.'

All this, Luther declared, was a work of the Devil. Under the papacy the Devil had spread out his nets by the erection of cloisters and schools, 'so that it was not possible for a single boy to escape him without a special miracle from God.' Now, on the contrary, because his wiles had been exposed by God's Word, he would not let the boys learn anything. 'Nobody has any idea what a wicked fiendish proceeding this is, and it is going on so quietly that the mischief will be accomplished before we can take counsel together and hinder it. People are afraid of the Turks, of war, and of floods, for they understand the danger of these things; but what the Devil has now in his mind nobody sees, and so no one is frightened, and it is all taken quietly. But, if they only knew, where they would give one gulden to fight against the Turks, if they were close at our throats, they would give a hundred if perchance one single boy might thereby be brought up to be an honest Christian man. . . . Woe, woe unto the world, always and eternally! Every day children are born and grow up amongst us, and there is no one, alas! there is nobody who looks after these young creatures and brings them up properly; they let them do just as they like.' 'Dear sirs, if we spend yearly such great sums on firearms, roads, bridges, dams, and countless other such constructions, in order that some town may enjoy material peace and comfort, should we not much more spend as much on the needy children of the poor, so

that we may produce, here and there, an able man for a schoolmaster?' By means of the 'Gospel' which he had preached, the citizens, he said, had been saved from the many great expenses they had been subject to under the papacy; would they not spend at least a tenth part of this on the rebuilding of schools? 'Each citizen ought to reason with himself thus-wise: 'If hitherto he had been compelled to lose so much money on indulgences, masses, vigils, foundations, testaments, anniversaries, begging friars, brotherhoods, pilgrimages, and all the rest of the rotten rubbish, and now henceforth by the grace of God he was to be saved from such robbery, would he not for the future give a part of his gains, as a thank-offering to God, for providing schools to educate the poor children, which is a matter of such great importance? For verily we must have people who can administer God's Word and sacraments to us, and tend the souls of the people. But how shall we provide such pastors if the schools are allowed to perish and no more Christians are brought up?'[1]

'I have now preached and written unceasingly,' he complains in the same year 1524, in a missive to his followers in Riga and Livonia, 'that good schools ought to be established in all towns, so that we may train up learned men and women, who will make good Christian pastors and preachers, so that the Word of God may be abundantly propagated; but they are so tardy and indolent in setting about the work, as though each one was anxious only about his food and his temporal necessities, that it seems to me it must come to this: that both schoolmasters and pastors and preachers

[1] *Collected Works*, xxii. 171-174, 177, 193.

have to renounce their professions and betake themselves to handicrafts, and leave the Word of God to take care of itself, so that they may guard themselves against starvation.' Formerly, he said, a town of four or five hundred citizens gave from five to seven hundred gulden yearly to the mendicant friars alone, besides all the payments for bishops, officials, mendicants, and beggars; but now, on the contrary, 'there was such a poor, miserable, forlorn government' that scarcely one or two hundred gulden could be raised for schools and endowment of preachers. Formerly hundreds of priests and monks had been maintained in the most extravagant manner; lands and retainers, towns and castles had even been allotted to them; but now the preachers were treated as the rich man had treated Lazarus. Not even three preachers could be provided for; everywhere the people were a prey to avarice and anxiety about their daily bread. They were acting, 'without any necessity for it, like unbelieving heathens,' and God would consequently permit a time of terrible scarcity to overtake them, and it would be perfectly just.[1]

The Church doctrine of good works, by which men ought to turn their faith in Christ into practice, and lay up for themselves treasures in heaven, had called forth during the Middle Ages numberless benevolent donations and legacies for charitable institutions, hospitals, and orphanages, had built churches and cathedrals, and adorned them with the most beautiful works of art; had founded the higher and lower schools, and provided them with endowments of all sorts. The new doctrine of justification by faith alone, and of the

[1] *Collected Works*, xli. 131–132.

worthlessness of good works, had cut through the nerve of self-sacrifice for the sake of the ideal things of life, and at the same time was acting destructively on the ordinances and institutions handed down to us from our forefathers.

The most convincing witness to these facts is Luther himself.

Over and over again in his writings he speaks of the large-hearted munificence which prevailed under the papacy. 'It rained alms, endowments, legacies in those days,' he says, but under the evangelical rule, on the contrary, 'nobody will give a farthing!'[1] 'Under the papacy people were charitable and gave gladly, but now, under the dispensation of the Gospel, nobody gives any longer; everybody fleeces everybody else, and each wants to have everything for himself only. And the longer the Gospel is preached the more do the people become steeped in avarice, pride, and pomp. All the world grabs and saves, and yet nobody will be called miserly, but every one is a "good evangelical" and a true Christian. And this grabbing and pinching touches nobody so much as poor Brother "Study" and the poor pastors in towns and villages.' 'These last are obliged to pay up, and to let themselves be fleeced and skinned; and the money that peasants, burghers, and nobles extort from them the latter lavish and squander in superfluous food and clothes—pour it down their throats or hang it about their bodies. Therefore I have often said that this state of things cannot continue any longer, but must be changed; either the Turk will come, or else old Nick, and will suddenly make a clean

[1] *Collected Works*, xliii. 164.

sweep of all that has during this long time been extorted, stolen, plundered, and collected, or else the Day of Judgment will come in and put an end to the game.'[1]

In other places he says: 'Under the papacy everybody was merciful and kind; they gave gladly with both hands, and with great devoutness. Now, although people ought to show themselves grateful for the Holy Gospel, they will give nothing, but will only take. 'Formerly every town, when it had grown to a fair size, was able comfortably to support several cloisters. I say nothing of the priests of the mass, and the rich foundations;' now they refuse to maintain in a town two or three preachers, pastors, and instructors of youth, even 'when it would not be done with their own money, but with that of strangers which is left over from the papacy.'

From year to year Luther's complaints grew louder. 'Those who ought to be good Christians, because they had heard the Gospel, were much more hard-hearted and unmerciful than before, as one sees now only too plainly. Formerly, when, under the misguidance of the pontificate and the false Church-services, good works were compulsory, everybody was ready and willing.' 'Now, on the contrary, all the world had learnt nothing else than to save up and extort, and openly rob by lies, tricks, usury, overcharging, and overrating. And everybody behaves towards his neighbour as if he did not regard him even as a friend, still less as a brother of Christ, but as a murderous enemy, and as if he only wanted to grab everything for himself and grudged anything to anybody else. This goes on every day and gets con-

[1] *Collected Works*, v. 264–265.

tinually worse and worse, and is universal among all classes, princes, nobles, burghers, peasants, in all courts, towns, villages—yea in all houses. Tell me where there is a single town so independent, or so pious, that it would now collect a sufficient sum to maintain one schoolmaster or pastor. Yea, verily, if we had not had alms and endowments in former times from the benevolence of our ancestors, the burghers in the towns, and the nobles and peasants of the country would long ago have been altogether deprived of the Gospel, and not a single poor preacher could now be supplied with food and drink.'

'We might count on our fingers, here and elsewhere, how much they give and do, who are enjoying the Gospel, I will not say in order that we all who are now living may have preachers and scholars, but for the sake of our heirs and descendants who shall come after us, that they may be able to learn what we have learnt and believed. Ought we not verily to be ashamed of ourselves, when we think of all that our parents and ancestors did, kings and nobles, princes and others, who gave so lavishly and charitably, even to excess, for churches, pastors, schools, foundations, hospitals, and so forth, by all which generosity their posterity has in no wise been impoverished?'[1]

And because under the dominion of the papacy, he says elsewhere, everybody was so charitable, God sent them a good time as a reward. 'Christ has spoken and promised: "Give, and it shall be given unto you: good measure, pressed down, and running over shall be meted out unto you." And this also is proved by the

[1] *Collected Works*, xiv. 389-390.

experience of many pious people of all times, who, before our day, gave liberal alms for preachers, and schools, and the maintenance of the poor, and so forth, and to whom God gave in return good times, peace, and tranquillity; thence also came that saying among the people which confirms the truth of all this: "*Kirchengehen säumet nicht, Almosengeben armet nicht, unrecht Gut wudelt nicht.*"[1] Therefore, too, we now see the very opposite in the world, because such insatiable avarice and greed are abroad, and nobody gives either to God or to his neighbour, but only grabs for himself what is given by others, while the sweat and the lifeblood of the poor are drained; therefore, God gives us as our reward famine, dissension, and all manner of calamity, till at length we shall be driven to devouring ourselves, or being devoured by one another, all of us together, the rich with the poor, the great with the small.'

[1] 'Church-going does not hinder, almsgiving does not impoverish, unrighteous gains do not enrich.'

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